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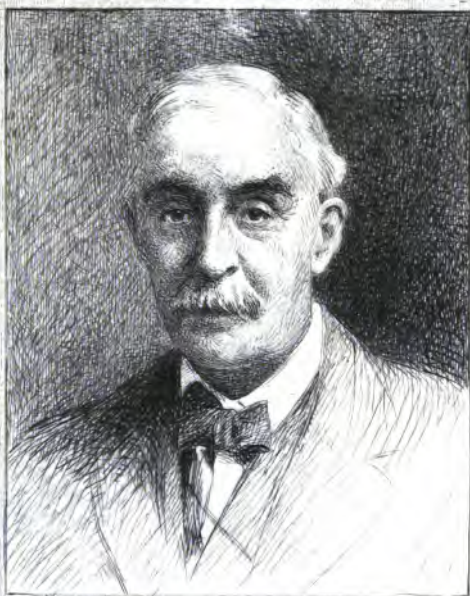
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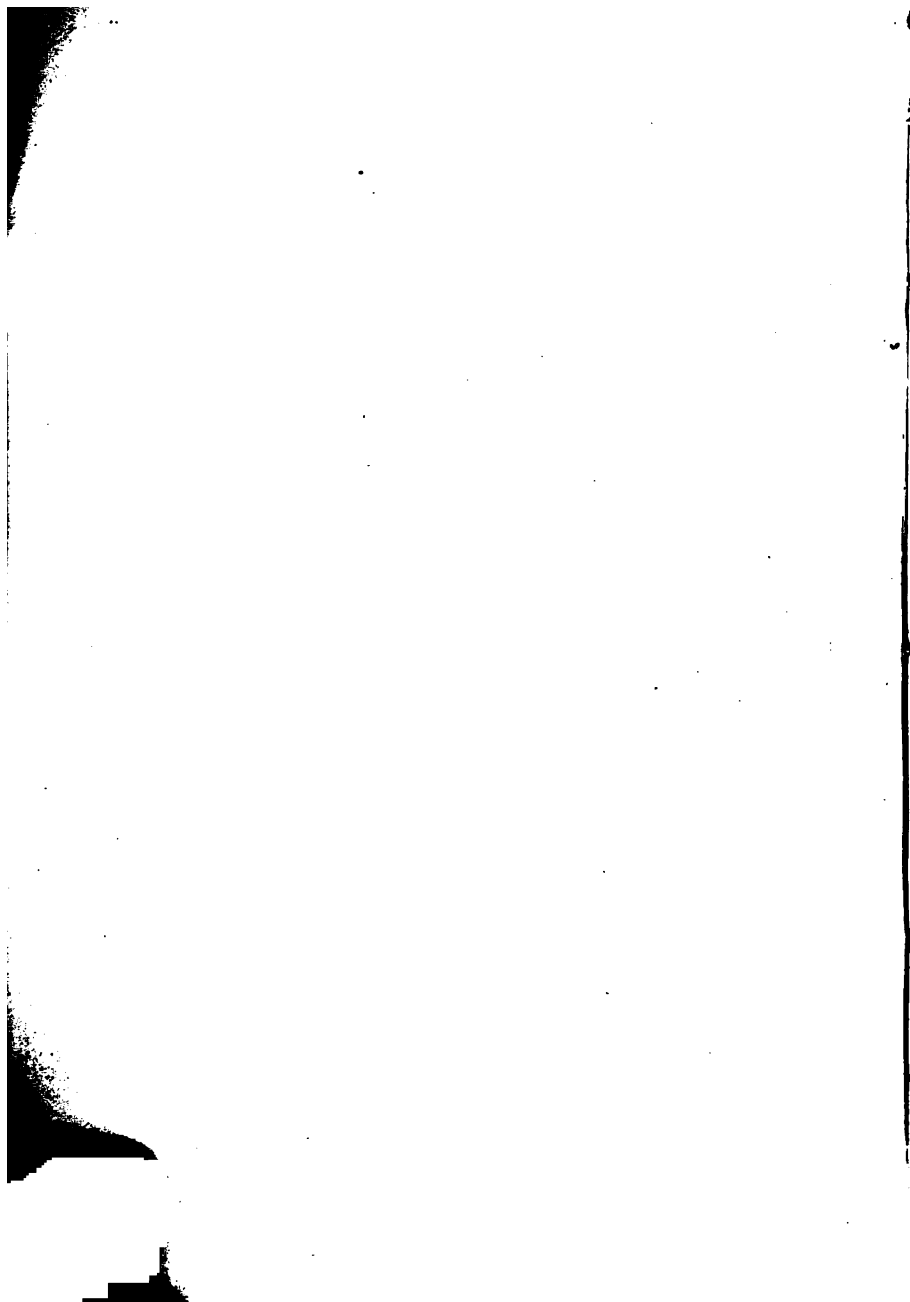
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PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.



PROGRESSIVE REVELATION ;

OR,

THROUGH NATURE TO GOD.

Emma
BY
Marie
CAILLARD,

AUTHOR OF "ELECTRICITY: THE SCIENCE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,"
"THE INVISIBLE POWERS OF NATURE," ETC.



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PREFACE.

WITH the exception of the Introductory Chapter purposely written for the present work, the contents of this volume first appeared as a series of essays in the *Contemporary Review*, by kind permission of the Editor of which they are now reprinted. Although this circumstance rendered necessary a somewhat different treatment of the subject than would otherwise have been chosen, it is hoped that, even in their original form, the fact that the essays present a continuous development of the same line of thought will have been obvious to all readers. They have now been carefully and thoroughly re-

vised ; advantage has been taken of the criticisms which the writer has from time to time received ; some important additions and alterations have been made, and in every place where the argument seemed to require strengthening, an effort has been made to supply what was lacking.

When, however, the subjects under discussion are of such transcendent importance as in the present instance, the most earnest and strenuous endeavour to approach them with adequacy of treatment must fall far short of the goal which was aimed at. No reader of "Progressive Revelation" will feel this more acutely than does its writer. Nevertheless she ventures to hope that the line of thought suggested may prove of service to some among those who are perplexed and distressed at the apparent conflict between the Christian faith and science. The opposing conclusions to which they seem to lead are

so entirely the result of misunderstanding on both sides, that a sacred duty is laid on those by whom the true relationship between the universal scope of revelation and the universal method of science is perceived, and to whom any power of expression is given, to bear their part in attempting to make that relationship clear to others. Such is the motive which has given rise to the present volume.

In conclusion the writer has only to express her deep sense of obligation to the authors, dead and living, whose works she has studied, and from whom, no less in difference than in agreement, she has received invaluable mental assistance.

EMMA MARIE CAILLARD.

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PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE word "progress" is linked with very many other comprehensive terms. We hear of the progress of civilisation, the progress of education, the progress of science ; we do not often hear of the progress of revelation. Indeed to not a few among us, such an expression would appear to bind together conceptions which, if not absolutely opposed, are yet so essentially dissimilar that they could not throw any light the one upon the other. Perhaps if we were to substitute for the progress of revelation, progress in the knowledge of God, which is the goal of

revelation, the connexion would no longer seem unnatural. To progress in the knowledge of God is, according to Him to whom Christians look alike for the interpretation of human and divine mysteries, to become more living ; for eternal life, He tells us, is the knowledge of God.* The conception of a progressive life is not only free from any contradictory element, it is that which must hold good of all life not beginning to verge towards death ; and if we have been unable to think of revelation as progressive, it is because, however unconsciously, we have regarded it as dead instead of living, the stereotyped record of the past, instead of the ever-developing chronicle of the present. There can be little doubt that this attitude of mind with regard to revelation arises to a great extent from the very inadequate idea formed of its scope. English Christians especially have been accustomed to think of revelation

* St. John xvii.

as coincident only with the scriptural records, rigidly confined to the Old and New Testaments, and divided by an insurmountable barrier from anything beyond. This at any rate has been their theory. Practically, every individual Christian who has endeavoured to carry his faith into his daily life, has found in the discipline and vicissitudes of that daily life itself, a complement to the biblical revelation, which he would be the first to acknowledge as indispensable, though he might hesitate to give it the name which yet alone could properly describe it. In claiming as avenues of revelation all avenues of thought and experience, we are but carrying the instinctive avowal of the individual Christian to its reasoned and legitimate issue.

This claim of revelation to all avenues of thought and experience cannot be too emphatically urged in the present day. The failure to recognise it lies at the root of the supposed antagonism between science and

religion, of that opposition of faith to reason which is fatal to both alike, and altogether alien to the true spirit of Christianity.* The appeal of Christ is not to this or that part of the nature of man, it is to the *whole* man; and the special work of our age, the contribution which it has to bring to the further development of the truth bequeathed to it from the past, by those whose work without ours "could not be made perfect," is the perception and demonstration of Christ's appeal, alike to the reason and the moral consciousness. We have to prove that the Incarnation does not only satisfy the religious and emotional aspirations, but is also the one sufficient answer to intellectual and ethical perplexities. That such is truly the task allotted to us is made evident by many signs of the times; not least by the numerous vain attempts to reconcile the

* The antithesis to Faith, in the New Testament, is, as Mr. Gore points out in his "Bampton Lectures," p. 209, not Reason, but *sight*, *i.e.* sense.

scientific and philosophic thought of the day with the Christian faith, by offering us a Christianity substantially without Christ, and endeavouring to satisfy with cries of *Ecce Homo* beings whom the vision of God alone can suffice.

The extraordinary amount of misconception and confusion obtaining as to the true relationship of the Christian revelation to that complementary revelation of nature, through the study of which science has done and is doing so much to expand and enlarge our conceptions of man and of the universe, cannot be better illustrated than by the following passage from the Gifford Lectures of 1894, delivered by an eminent German theologian, Professor Otto Pfeiderer. Speaking of the "new scholasticism" consequent upon the return of Protestant theology after the Renaissance to the "old dogmas," he says :—

"Yet these partially retrograde currents could not keep back the new advance of non-theological secular

science which had proceeded from the impetus of the Renaissance. While the theologians were still busily employed in the Churches in restoring the old dogmas which had been built up on the basis of the Ptolemaic cosmology, and which fitted only into its framework, this cosmology was destroyed by Copernicus and supplanted by the new view of the world which stands in utter contradiction to the whole of the system of the ecclesiastical dogmatics, from the creation to the coming down of Christ and His return again, as was clearly recognised by Melancthon much more acutely than by all his later followers.”*

That the acceptance of the Copernican cosmology should thus be regarded as subversive of the truth of the Christian creed, simply because the expressions “descent” and “ascent” of Christ cannot be taken as literally accurate in their physical sense,—because they would have to be interpreted, as indeed Christian theology has always interpreted them, to mean enter-

* “Philosophy and Development of Religion,” by Otto Pfeleiderer, D.D., being the Gifford Lectures for 1894, vol. i., p. 76.


ing into and leaving earthly conditions,—is so astounding a result of modern endeavours at “reconciliation,” and shows so curious a misapprehension of what the claims of science really are, that were it a solitary instance it might be considered as the abnormal outcome of a mind individually warped. It is impossible, however, to regard it in this manner. In the first place, Professor Pfeiderer’s utterances cannot thus be set aside; the learning and thoughtfulness which mark these addresses, his responsible position as Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, the recognition of his worth as a theologian which the invitation to deliver the Gifford lectures implies, all these considerations compel us to regard his opinions as representative, as containing the conclusions, not of a solitary individual, but of a school of thought.

In the second place, this is not the only instance of the untoward consequences to the Christian faith supposed to be inevitable

upon acceptance of the facts of science. We have but to remind ourselves of the conflict, not yet over, which has raged about "evolution" and "design" to be well assured of this. The intellectual confusion of which such conflicts are primarily the sign, leads but too frequently either to the abandonment of the substance of Christianity, or to the ignoring of any scientific discoveries regarded as incompatible with faith, in which case the faith suffers at least as much as the reason which has been sacrificed to it. The only way to prevent either of these two evils is to do away with the intellectual confusion which is their cause, and the first step towards this is to understand distinctly what we mean by revelation and what we mean by science ; thus only shall we be enabled to ascertain their relationship to one another.

By revelation is meant the unveiling of the Divine Being to human understanding, the process by which God makes Himself known to man ; and it has already been said

that the avenues of revelation are coincident with the avenues of thought and experience. In other words, there is no possible knowledge which does not conduce, directly or indirectly, to the knowledge of God. By qualifying revelation as Christian revelation, we mean that all such knowledge consciously centres and finds its co-ordinating principle in Christ ; that in Him we see the meaning of the revelation made in nature, in history, and to the individual consciousness ; that in Him is given us "the image of the invisible God," whom "no man hath seen nor can see, who dwells in the light unapproachable ;" and consequently that in Him alone all things can be understood and explained, perceived in their due order and relationship to one another, to man and to God ; that in Him, therefore, is the life of the universe and the light of man. The Christian revelation thus considered is unbounded, or rather bounded only by the capacity of man to receive it, and hence necessarily progres-



sive ; for since the capacity of man continually increases as his moral consciousness deepens and his "knowledge grows from more to more," so are his eyes slowly opened to another and yet another aspect of that vision of God in which alone he can find all other vision completed, to which all other vision in reality tends, and is only not perceived to do so because of the "clouds and darkness" which man's own ignorance and imperfection still interpose between him and the Supreme Goal of his effort and desire. "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee ;" only the more restless as a greater knowledge and wider experience render a deeper and fuller rest needful and attainable. The scope of the Christian revelation is, then, universal. It cannot be confined to the collection of sacred and inspired writings which we call the Bible ; nor to the history of one nation, transcendently important though that history may be

to the human race at large ; nor to certain kinds of individual experience, however convincing, nay indispensable to the individuals who are the subjects of it. All these are included, find their due place, and contribute to the fulness and harmony of the whole ; but the whole itself is more than any or all of them, and that for the simple reason that we can set no limits to the truth of God. It is boundless as He is boundless.

In face of this universal scope of revelation, what is the claim of Science ? It may perhaps be most conveniently stated in the words of one of the latest spokesmen on this subject.

"The unity of all science," says Professor Karl Pearson, *"consists alone in its method, not in its material."* The man who classifies any facts whatever, who sees their mutual relation and describes their sequence, is applying the scientific method and is a man of science. The facts may belong to the past history of mankind, to the social statistics of our great cities, to the atmosphere of the most distant stars, to the digestive organs of a worm, or to the

life of a scarcely visible bacillus. It is not the facts themselves which form science, but the method in which they are dealt with. The material of science is co-extensive with the whole physical universe; not only that universe as it now exists, but with its past history, and the past history of all life therein. When every fact, every present or past phenomenon of that universe, every phase of present or past life therein, has been examined, classified and co-ordinated with the rest, then the mission of science will be completed. What is this but saying that the task of science can never end till man ceases to be, till history is no longer made, and development itself ceases? " *

The claim of Science is therefore also universal. It "asserts that the scientific method is the sole gateway to the whole region of knowledge," † "that wherever there is the slightest possibility for the mind of man to *know*, there is a legitimate problem for science;" in other words, a fit subject for the application of the scientific method.

* "Grammar of Science," by Karl Pearson, p 15.

† *Ibid.*, p. 30.

It will be seen, then, that the question, and the only question, which needs to be answered in order to determine the relationship of science to the Christian revelation, is whether the latter really affords a "possibility for the mind of man to know ;" if it does, even though that possibility may extend beyond the "limits of the physical universe," the method of science will still be applicable, because there will still be a necessity for the classification of facts, the perception of their mutual relationship, and the description of their sequence.

The effect which this method has produced on the region usually denominated "the realm of nature," and which is now understood (as is indicated in the quotation from Professor Karl Pearson given above,) to include all known manifestations of organic and superorganic development, as well as the inorganic universe, is to introduce harmony and order everywhere. Catastrophes, anomalies, contraventions of those observed sequences which we call natural

laws, are now understood not to occur. If they appear to do so, it is recognised that the appearance is due to our own ignorance, that a closer study of the facts involved, and a wider and deeper application of the scientific method, would bring these seeming exceptions also within the range of classification and description in their due sequence, so that men now "view nature as an ordered whole, in which all particular being and happening are conditioned by their causal connexion with everything else." * This result is due simply to the work of their own intelligence upon the material supplied to them in the external world. The "scientific method" is, in fact, neither more nor less than bringing to bear those constitutive principles of the human mind through which alone human knowledge is possible, to the apprehension of the human environment. It is necessary to observe, how-

* Pfleiderer, "Philosophy and Development of Religion."

ever, that if these principles were not in correspondence with man's environment, were not truly related to it, they could not be brought to bear on it. That they can be and are so brought to bear, and that only by their means can man attain to any comprehension of the universe to which he belongs, is a proof that he does indeed belong to it, that he is a part of it and an outcome of it, and that all that he finds in his own nature has its counterpart and complement in the nature which is external to him.

The practical importance of this consideration in the present connexion will appear shortly ; for the moment it is desirable to draw attention to the fact that this "view of nature as an ordered whole" is, in its present acceptance, a view of modern date and verification. It is not necessary here to substantiate this assertion. The most cursory acquaintance with history and literature, nay with the less cultured and thoughtful portion of actual

society, will amply suffice to do so ; but it is of paramount importance that we should recognise the enormous difference which is thus made, and rightly made, in our conception of the relationship of nature to God. It is not possible that we should any longer think of Him as "interfering" from time to time by "special providences" and "miraculous interpositions" in that order which is nothing if not the outcome of His own law-expressing and law-abiding nature, the pledge of that divine consistency in which there "is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning." The progress in revelation, *i.e.*, the truer and deeper penetration into the "invisible things" rendered possible by a truer and deeper knowledge of those that are visible, compels us to think of the whole universe as living and moving and having its being in God ; so that the manifestations of His presence are not to be looked for in arbitrary reversals of established sequence, but

in the all-embracing inception and harmonious development of design which render such reversals unnecessary. But we could not thus think of God till we had learned thus to regard nature. Before the latter had been perceived by us as indeed a cosmos, God could not be known as the God of order ; and it was more in consonance with our catastrophic conceptions of the universe, to think of Him as a miracle-worker, overcoming difficulties by arbitrary demonstrations of irresponsible power, than as developing an eternal and changeless purpose to which no such demonstrations are necessary, because emergencies calling for them do not arise. Even now there are not a few Christians who would demur to giving in their adhesion to what has been stated, and that for two main reasons : (1) that it appears to them inconsistent with the inspiration of the Scriptures, and (2) with the Incarnation.

It is proposed, before returning to the question which we have seen must determine the

position of Science with regard to the Christian revelation,—*i.e.*, whether the latter affords a possibility for the mind of man to know,—to consider both these objections in some detail ; because it is evident, that if belief in the inspiration of the scriptures and in the Incarnation entails a belief in occurrences which are not in harmony with the natural order, then to those occurrences we cannot apply the scientific method. They cannot be “classified, seen in their mutual relation, and described in their sequence,” and they do not, scientifically considered, afford a “possibility for the mind of man to know.” And lest it should be thought presumptuous thus to bring the most sacred beliefs, and especially the central truth of Christianity, to the test of their being able to be thus classified, related, and described, the reader is earnestly requested to ponder over the following quotation from the writings of one whom none can accuse of being a half-believer in the supreme revelation which bears

the name of Christ, and to ask himself whether their honest and manly challenge does not find an echo in the depths of his own heart.

“St. John says, ‘We beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ Am I to believe this, asks the objector, on the testimony of a Galilæan fisherman, or, for aught we know, of some later doctor assuming that guise? I answer: You are not to believe, you cannot believe, either fisherman or doctor, if the assertion itself is contrary to truth, to the laws of your being, to the order and constitution of the universe in which you are living. They may repeat it till doomsday. It may come, as it did, with no authority, against the weight of all opinion, breaking through the customs and prescriptions of centuries, defying the rulers of the world; or it may come clad with authority, with the prescription of centuries, with the help of rulers and public opinion;—it is all the same; you cannot believe the words, however habitual and familiar they may be to you, if there is that in them which contradicts the spirit of a man that is in you, which does not address that with demonstration and power.”*

* F. D. Maurice, “Theological Essays,” p. 90.

I. The writer of an excellent and suggestive little volume on "Inspiration and the Bible" appositely calls attention to the fact that, though all Christians agree in believing in that inspiration, very different and often inconclusive answers are given by them when questioned as to the grounds of their belief. Thus one man will reply that "the Church says so, and another that his fathers said so, and another that the Bible itself teaches it, and another that the Spirit of God revealed it to him ;" * on all which answers the comment may be made that there can be but one convincing proof of the inspiration of the Bible, and that must lie in the Bible itself. Never book spake like this Book, has been the witness, not of Christians alone, but of many who would now indignantly repudiate both the name and the faith which they might never have renounced, had those sacred writings been allowed to tell their own tale, and plead their own cause, untrammelled

* R. F. Horton, "Inspiration and the Bible," p. 6.

by the human accessories of verbal inspiration and absolute historical infallibility which they nowhere claim for themselves. The testimony of one of these witnesses shall be given here.

"In the eighth century B.C.," says Professor Huxley, "in the heart of a world of idolatrous polytheists, the Hebrew prophets put forth a conception of religion which appears to me to be as wonderful an inspiration of genius as the art of Pheidias, or the science of Aristotle. 'And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' If any so-called religion takes away from this great saying of Micah, I think it wantonly mutilates; while if it adds thereto, I think it obscures the perfect ideal of religion."*

If "to walk humbly with thy God" may be taken to imply a real knowledge, bounded though it be by human limitations, of Him with whom we thus "walk," all Christians must agree with Professor Huxley that "Micah's

* "Essays on Controverted Questions," p. 95.

great saying " embodies the perfect ideal of religion ; and though such an inclusion would not,—so far at least as can be judged by his other writings,—be allowed by Professor Huxley, it is impossible not to welcome gladly so strong a testimony to the unique worth of those sacred records, part only of whose divine meaning he has been able to decipher, as that afforded in the passage already quoted, and the following, taken from the same volume :—

"The Bible has been the *Magna Charta* of the poor and the oppressed ; down to modern times, no state has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account, in which the duties so much more than the privileges of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and in Leviticus. Nowhere is the fundamental truth, that the welfare of the state in the long run depends on the uprightness of the citizen, so strongly laid down. Assuredly the Bible talks no trash about the rights of man ; but it insists on the equality of duties, on the liberty

to bring about that righteousness which is somewhat different from struggling for 'rights'; on the fraternity of taking thought for one's neighbour as for oneself. . . . I do not say that the highest biblical ideal is exclusive of others, or needs no supplement. But I do believe that the human race is not yet, possibly may never be, in a position to dispense with it." *

But the internal evidence of the inspiration of the Bible does not lie wholly in the lofty and comprehensive ethical ideal whose development can be traced through the whole collection of books, written under such varying circumstances and at such different periods, which are included under that name. The ethical ideal of the Hebrews was closely bound up with the conception of a righteous God, as is very early manifested in the sacred records. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth *do right*?" asks Abraham; and we may regard the whole "evolution of theology," or, as we should

* "Essays on Controverted Questions," pp. 52, 53.

prefer to call it, the progressive revelation of the Old and New Testaments, as an answer to his question.

Question, and consequently answer, were in the early days of Israel's existence as a nation, exceedingly crude and distorted, as no one who reads their national chronicles can deny. There is no exception to the rule that the eye sees only that which it brings with it the faculty for seeing; and unparalleled in the whole history of the human race as was the spiritual genius of this remarkable people, it did not start into existence full grown and fully armed, but gradually developed, under the stress of circumstances and the dire conflicts and perplexities of national and individual life, into the marvellous power and insight of which the "great saying of Micah," and many others not inferior to it to be found in the pages of the Prophets, as well as the establishment of a pure monotheistic worship, give such ample evidence. The God of "purer

eyes than to behold iniquity" was the God to whom the ethical ideal of the chosen race led its highest representatives to bear witness, but led them, by slow degrees, and despite many lapses on the part of their nation, into a crude and barbarous idolatry. Recapitulating the "main and certain results" to which a study of the subject of the "teraphim" leads, Archdeacon Farrar makes the following remarks :—

"It was against the use of idolatrous symbols and emblems in a monotheistic worship that the *second* commandment was directed, whereas the first is aimed against the graver sin of direct polytheism. But the whole history of Israel shows how utterly and how early the law must have fallen into desuetude. The worship of the golden calf, and of the calves at Dan and Bethel, against which, so far as we know, neither Elijah nor Elisha said a single word; the tolerance of high places, teraphim and betylia; the offering of incense for centuries to the brazen serpent destroyed by Hezekiah; the occasional glimpses of the most startling irregularities sanctioned apparently in the temple-worship itself, prove most decisively

that a pure monotheism and an independence of symbols was the result of a slow and painful course of God's disciplinal dealings among the noblest thinkers of a single nation, and not, as is so constantly and erroneously urged, of the whole Semitic race ; in other words, one single branch of the Semites was under God's providence *educated* into pure monotheism only by centuries of misfortune and series of inspired men."*

There could not be a clearer and more forcible epitome of the progressive revelation of the Old Testament than this. But the record of the gradual development of the ethical ideal and the truer vision of God which it rendered possible, is accompanied by the record of many occurrences usually regarded as instances of those very contraventions of the natural order which the scientific view of it renders inadmissible ; and is further generally supposed to be indissolubly connected with a

* Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature," vol. iii., p. 986. Art. "Teraphim," quoted in Huxley's "Essays on Controverted Questions," p. 153.

special and detailed account of the origin of the universe. With regard to the latter, we may, for the present purpose, leave it on one side,* remarking simply (1) that the origin of the universe, if we regard it as having had an origin, must necessarily lie outside the course of nature as we know it; and (2) that the essential, and the *only* essential, Christian belief with regard to creation is contained in the two first clauses of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. We are committed to no theory of creation whatever by these words. We simply refer the origin of all things to the Father of our spirits, those spirits in whose existence the "main miracle" of the universe, self-conscious life, is exemplified. And this brings us immediately to the consideration of those other "miracles" which generally go by that name. They are referred in the Bible,

* The reader will find this subject treated in some detail in chap. iv.

and out of it by those who believe in them, to "spiritual agency," to the direct action, therefore, of mind on matter or of mind on mind ; for when we come to analyse it, this is what the expression "spiritual agency" means. The indirect action of mind on mind and of mind on matter, we are entirely familiar with ; and we do not regard it as opposed to any natural law, though it often produces very surprising results, exceedingly difficult in the present state of knowledge to classify and describe in their due relation and sequence.

"I whisper a secret to A., and a short time afterwards I find that B. is perfectly aware of it. It sometimes happens so. It has probably happened in what we are accustomed to consider a very commonplace fashion,—A. has told him. When you come to analyse the process, however, it is not really at all simple. I will not go into tedious details ; but when you remember that all that conveyed the thought was the impalpable compressions and dilatations of a gas, and that in the process of transmission it existed for a finite space of time in this intermediate and

curiously mechanical condition, you may realise something of puzzlement in the process. I am not sure but that we ought to consider some direct sympathy between two minds, without this mechanical process, as really a more simple and direct mode of conveying an idea." *

Thus, in this very ordinary, everyday occurrence of the interchange of thought by speech, there is an action of mind on mind, through the intervention of matter, the manner of which no application of the scientific method has hitherto succeeded in making clear to us. Again, in every single instance in which man uses material agents,—when he builds a house, when he constructs a tunnel, when he sends a message by electric telegraph, when he paints a picture, when by means of his own voice or other instruments he delights his fellows with glorious music,—he is giving an exemplification of mind acting on matter, and in most instances through matter on mind again ; and however

* "Thought Transference : an Application of Modern Thought to Ancient Superstitions," by Prof. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S. .

we turn and twist our thoughts, and the words in which we try to express them; we cannot give any better statement of the mystery (for at present it is a mystery,) than this; unless in exceeding scrupulousness of appearing to imply that we know more than we do we prefer the form: There is interaction between what we call mind and what we call matter. Farther than this we cannot go, though some would have us add that mind only acts on mind through the ordinary sense-channels, and on matter by the intervention of other matter. If we venture to doubt these assertions, we are frequently met by the rejoinder that we believe in contraventions of natural law. A very little reflection will show how very crude and superficial such an objection really is. As will be more fully exemplified in Chapter V., the connection between the phenomena of consciousness, and the so-called "material" phenomena by which it is accompanied, is wholly unknown; equally unknown is

the connection between change in the motion of matter and willing, which, where a conscious agent is concerned, invariably precedes that change.* Somewhere in both these comprehensive classes of phenomena, there is to human perception a failure of that connecting link which certainly we always intuitively look for whenever we seem to see two occurrences bound together as cause and effect. There is neither more nor less than such a failure in any instance of the apparent action of mind on mind other than through the ordinary sense channels, or of mind on matter without the intervention of "material" agency. Simply the failure of the connecting-link, or chain of links, takes place at another stage in the process, that is all ;—or perhaps the difference would be better expressed by saying that, in

* The non-scientific reader may perhaps need to be reminded that *change* in the motion of matter is all we are able to bring about by any means. No known matter being initially at rest, we cannot start its motion.

the cases with which we are certainly most familiar, we cannot trace the first and last link in the chain (*i.e.*, for instance, between an act of will and the utterance of some articulate communication ; and again between this articulate communication in the form of aërial vibrations, and its psychical correlative in the brain of the person addressed, by which he is enabled to understand its “ meaning ”) ; whereas, in much rarer instances, which yet are too frequent and too well-authenticated to set aside, we are not only unable to trace the first and last links, but the intermediate links also. This does not by any means prove that there are none, nor that intermediate links are dispensed with where they cannot be traced ; we have as much reason for believing in their existence as we have in that of the first and last links, on which we have never been able to put our finger. We are not constrained to believe in mental any more than in physical action at a distance :

what we are constrained to believe in is our own exceeding ignorance on the whole subject, and the consequent folly of saying that such and such occurrences are impossible because, according to our present knowledge, they appear to be in contradiction to an order in whose sequences there exist to us such formidable gaps. We know enough to assert that the natural order is indeed *an order*, and therefore that whatever happens in it happens according to law. We do not know enough to assert that what we cannot yet classify and describe in its due sequence, however puzzling and contrary to preconceived notions it may be, is therefore opposed to law and impossible,* though in such instances a far greater

* The most eminent students of the natural order are the first to acknowledge this. The writer on one occasion cited to Professor G. F. Fitzgerald a passage from Professor Tait's "Recent Advances in Physical Science," in which it is very positively stated that had not the uncreatability and indestructibility of matter been proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt, "by enormously extended" experimental evidence, no chemical analysis would be possible, because "no reasoning whatever"

weight of evidence is necessary and should be demanded.

Applying these remarks to the Old Testament miracles, we observe in the first place that such overwhelming evidence is unattainable, though many of them may well have occurred, and yet not have been in contravention of the natural order, which is far wider and more inclusive than our present knowledge of it; and in the second place, that since the history of the Jews is a human history, we cannot regard it, nor does it claim to be regarded, as exempt from the legendary stage. Its claim is that in every stage, from first to last, it is a divinely acknowledged record of the divine method of national education, for the fulfilment of a national mission,—an exemplification of God's training for God's ends,

could deduce reliable results under conditions in which some substance might suddenly appear or disappear during the process. "Too strong," was the reply. "Might we not discover the laws according to which substances would appear and disappear?"

and therefore necessarily bearing the marks of development and adaptation. Had inspiration entailed absolute scientific and historical accuracy, it could not truly have been said that the Father of our spirits had revealed Himself to us through human channels. He would have used a special and unique method to which nothing in our experience could be compared. As it is, we have this treasure of inspiration also "in earthen vessels." Men of like passions with ourselves, credulous with the credulity of their time, liable to errors of judgment, to partisanship, to intellectual bewilderment, were yet enabled to receive, and to impart for the benefit of all ages, truths of the deepest and widest spiritual import ; and the divine consecration of Hebrew legend and history as a vehicle of divine revelation opens our eyes to the true meaning of all other national records.

Thus the right of the Jews to be regarded as a divinely-chosen people does not rest on the authenticity of the plagues of Egypt, or

the miraculous supply of manna in the desert, or on the sun "standing still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon." It rests upon the far firmer and surer ground of that special course of disciplinal training, the record of which in the historical, and the clue to which in the prophetic, books of the Old Testament, bear, in spite of all the obscurities of partial legend, and of all the chronological and historical errors and discrepancies which the most unsparing criticism can detect, the stamp of true inspiration to everyone who is able to look beneath and beyond the letter which killeth to the spirit which maketh alive. In the account of God's dealings with the Jews we have the key wherewith to unlock the mystery of His dealings with all the other nations of the earth; and in the aspirations of the noblest members of that wonderful people after justice and righteousness and truth,—in a word, after *God*,—we find expressed, with a fervour and sincerity of conviction that

He is, and can respond, unparalleled in any other literature, the deepest desires and most glorious hopes of religious man in all ages.

II. The miracles of the Old Testament, then, do not in any way invalidate our belief in its inspiration; neither does such a belief necessitate our accepting as facts occurrences contrary to the scientific view of nature as an ordered whole. But we have now to turn to that event which, if true, is of deeper significance than any other of which we can frame a conception, and whose far-reaching issues, and tremendous import, might seem to warn us away, as from ground too sacred to tread on, were it not that by its very nature it claims to be the pledge of a union which otherwise we could not have dared to regard as possible between man and God. We have, therefore, to ask: Is the Incarnation contrary to, or in accordance with, "truth, the laws of our being, and the order and constitution of the universe in which we live?"

It is very clear that the answer to the first of the three divisions of the question must depend partly on historical evidence: *partly*, because no *historical* evidence can be made strong enough to attest the truth of that which we firmly believe to be in opposition to the laws of man's being and the constitution of the universe. If, however, it is seen to be in harmony with these, then it requires as strong and no stronger evidence than that which is universally regarded as sufficient in other historical occurrences of the same date.

It is allowed, on all hands, that such a Person as Jesus Christ lived and died on our earth nineteen hundred years ago. The question is: Was He, could He have been, that which He claimed to be? And in this instance we cannot be content to leave the matter open, as in the case of the Old Testament miracles. Of these, and of the persons involved in their occurrence, we could never have more than a second-hand knowledge ;

but of Christ it is asserted that now, at the present day, in the midst of present perplexities, under the stress of present moral and intellectual conflicts, we may have a knowledge as certain and as direct as that which the twelve immediate disciples had of Him; and it is of paramount importance to the whole human race, and to each individual member of that race, that the truth of so momentous an assertion should be put to every test which can legitimately be applied to it. Nor, by using the expression "can legitimately be applied," is it intended for one moment to shirk, but, on the contrary, to welcome, the appeal to experiment which, in determining what is and what is not "possible for the mind of man to know," must ever be the final and crucial test. The sole reason for qualifying the word test by the word legitimate is that, in every case in which experiment is appealed to, the experiment must be such as is suited to its subject-matter. If

we desire to test the veracity or the affection of a friend, we cannot set to work in the same way as we should if we desired to test the attraction between a magnet and a lump of iron, or the equivalence in mass of equal volumes of the same substance ; and the tests which it is reasonable, and therefore legitimate, to require, in the supremely important instance under consideration, must in like manner be such as are possible and applicable.

It is not here intended to enter upon the question of historical evidence, further than to remind the reader that the period with which it deals in connection with the life of Christ on earth is far nearer to our own than that with which we are concerned in Old Testament records. History had emerged from the legendary stage ; and the earliest Christian writings are not removed farther than by one generation from the life of Him of whom they treat. There is no more reason why we should doubt the facts recorded of


Christ, than the facts recorded of any of His historical contemporaries, save for the haunting suspicion that the former are not, and the latter are, in harmony with the laws of man's being and the constitution of the universe. It is to this part of the enquiry alone, therefore, that our attention will be confined.

In speaking of the laws of our being, and the constitution of the universe, it is very necessary to remember two things, one of which has been already distinctly stated, and the other implied in much that has been said. The first is that those "laws of our being" which are exemplified in our intelligence have played an exceedingly important part in the constitution of the universe as we know it. The universe has supplied the material, but the human mind has supplied the co-ordinating principles which have rendered symmetry of perception and comprehension possible; and the fact that the one has thus lent itself to the completion of the other shows that they

are closely and indissolubly connected, thus leading immediately to the second point to which attention must be drawn, viz., the fact that the order of nature includes the phenomena of self-conscious life, which are, as we have seen, very far indeed from being as yet classified and described in their due relation and sequence to the physical universe. Indeed, both physical and psychical science show signs of approaching conditions in which no great further advance will be possible, unless we are able to connect the two classes of phenomena with which they deal in a far more intimate manner than has hitherto been accomplished, owing, perhaps, in part to the little experimental work which has been hitherto attempted in this direction, and to the peculiar difficulties which it presents. What we are certainly justified in stating, however, is that self-conscious, intelligent, ethical man is the outcome of the "cosmic process;" that as such he is the highest and most articulate expression

which that process is so far known to have attained ; and that in considering any occurrence which claims to have a special relation to him, if on investigation we find that the claim is made good, we have a right to conclude that were our knowledge adequate, we should be able to ascertain also its relation through him to the whole order of which we may regard him as the representative. In other words, if an occurrence is shown to be in accordance with the laws of man's being, it cannot be in contradiction to the constitution of the universe.

The fact that external nature presents itself as a necessary complement to the self-conscious life which without it could not exist, since self-consciousness entails and implies the differentiation of the self from the not-self, gives at once an insight into the reason of man's insatiable curiosity with regard to all natural processes, and his ineradicable faith that, to the questions he puts to nature, there exist



answers, whether or not he has so framed these questions as to have rendered to himself personally an answer possible. This faith in the intelligibility of the universe can only be justified by the further faith that man's intelligence,—his power of asking questions,—is itself natural, given rise to by nature because nature can satisfy it. Throughout the organic world we never find a developed or developing capacity to which nothing in the environment responds; and the response of nature to man's investigation of her is but another instance of this well-known correspondence. If, however, we have a right to regard these promptings in man to question nature as only existing because they can be answered, it can hardly be denied that, should we find in him promptings towards other questions not answerable by nature,* we have a right to regard them also as existing to be answered;

* They are not answerable by nature, however inclusive we make that term, because they refer to the ultimate origin of

—to conclude that nature is not the whole of his environment; that in and beyond nature exists what is greater than nature, whose relationship to man is the cause of these other questions, just as his relationship to nature is the cause of his questions to her. These deeper enquiries have for their object the power through which nature, and man as the highest representative of nature, came to be and are; and the relationship which man as a self-conscious, intelligent being holds to that power; and the knowledge which such questions and the responses to them lead is religious knowledge, or the knowledge of God.

And here we may fittingly refer to the experimental basis on which this, as all knowledge, can alone be founded; but we must first premise that to the investigation of nature man brings something besides intellectual capacity, —he brings *faith*, faith that to his questions

nature, and this knowledge, though it comes to us through natural channels, cannot have a natural source.

answers exist, though to himself they may not be decipherable ; and faith is equally indispensable when, in our human weakness, and in the stammering tongue of our human limitations, we address ourselves to enquire not of nature, but of God. We "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," even if that faith as yet reaches only to the conviction that in the universal order there exist no capacities without response ; that to the needs, the aspirations, the deep unsatisfied longings of the heart and mind of man *there are answers*, though in our blindness and ignorance we may fail again and again to find them ; just as again and again the patient seekers after truth in nature have been baffled and thwarted in their efforts, because their questions were not framed aright, until, through noble perseverance and unremitting toil, the true form of the enquiry was attained at last, and the reply, certain, satisfying, yet always opening out

more glorious possibilities beyond, bursts upon their delighted view.

What then are the experiments upon which knowledge of God must be based, by which the Christian revelation can be tested? Remember that it claims to be a *Personal* revelation made to personal beings; remember that in the knowledge which one human spirit can have of another, nothing but personal intercourse avails. To read of a fellow-being, to hear of him through mutual friends, even to study his works, is not sufficient as between man and man to enable us to know him : how then can it be sufficient as between man and God? To know God is not to read the Bible, is not to study nature, is not to go over the records of the life of Christ on earth, though all these are of the utmost importance in their own place and way, just as are their human analogues ; but to know God is to hold communion with Him as the living Father of our spirits, to bring to Him the

mental perplexities, the moral conflicts, the unsatisfied desires, the ever-rising doubts, the recurring difficulties, and to wait with untiring patience, with indomitable hope, with unquenchable faith, for an answer. To do this is to learn certainly, surely, though it may be painfully and slowly, to know God. Nor is it intended to say that those who are debarred from Christian privileges, who cannot consciously turn to Christ as their Guide, can have no knowledge of God: He is not hedged in by any barrier from revealing Himself to the children of His love, and the "Light which lighteth every man coming into the world" is perceived and followed by many from whom the source is hidden. It is, however, the very fact that the revelation of God is a personal revelation, and the knowledge of God a personal knowledge, which renders it so difficult for one to tell to another, so impossible unless that other has gone through a like experience for him to understand, wherein the proof

which is so convincing lies. Again the lower analogue may help us. We cannot give one man knowledge of another save by bringing them into personal contact ; nay, we cannot even make another truly acquainted with the results of our investigation of nature, unless he will himself investigate. First-hand knowledge is in each case indispensable ; it is no less indispensable when the highest object of all knowledge is in question. We cannot know God for one another ; but each man for himself may know Him according to his capacity ; according to the patience, the humility, the spiritual insight, the self-surrender that is in him ; and according also to his purity of heart and life. "The pure in heart shall see God."


Such knowledge as this is rightly termed supernatural, for its object is the source and reason of nature. At the same time the channels through which it reaches us are purely and entirely natural. They are (and in the supreme case of the Incarnation we have the

most striking illustration of this truth,) the channels of human experience, taking that term in its widest and most inclusive sense ; and whatever from our present standpoint appears to us supernatural in the manner and method of revelation will, we may rest assured, be clearly perceived from another and a higher standpoint, as included within the universal order of which at present our conception is so feeble and restricted. Thus, long ago, Bishop Butler suggested that there is "no absurdity in supposing that there may be many beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge and views may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i.e.*, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation : as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us." *

* "Analogy," Part I., ch., i. Nor does Butler regard the attainment in some degree of such extended knowledge as otherwise than possible to human beings even in the present stage of

In nature regarded as the totality of that which is, however, and consequently not only as the avenue but the object of revelation, we cannot but allow that though a necessity to and a complement of human self-conscious life, man's faculties do not meet with a full and sufficient response. Beyond a certain point, as the most earnest and faithful students of nature are the first to allow, her power of answering the intellectual enquiries of man fails. She has stores of wisdom and of truth into which he has hardly even glanced, which it may require long ages of research and observation before he can hope to understand; yet just as a child may baffle a philosopher by an apparently simple question, so man puts and must always put nature to silence with the two words "Wherefrom?" and "Whereunto?" Of her origin she can tell him nothing; of her destination she can

existence. In Part II., ch. iii. of the "Analogy," he expressly refers to the light which progress in "natural knowledge" may be expected to throw on the scriptural revelation.



tell him nothing,—nothing, that is, plainly and directly, as she replies to his other queries. Hints indeed she gives, suggestions, hopes ; but they are few and scattered, and need the illuminating supplement of a higher revelation before they can be interpreted.

But if nature cannot wholly satisfy the intellect, she is unable to satisfy the moral consciousness at all. Man is not content with knowing that such and such a fact exists, nor even with going a step farther and succeeding in classifying that fact, and describing it in its due relation and sequence to other facts : he is impelled to ask also, *Ought* it to exist ? Is the interpretation compatible with that inward standard by which I judge of what is *right*, with the laws of my being as expressed in moral consciousness ? That only certain classes of facts are capable of such a challenge is of course obvious. No one would feel constrained to enquire whether the law of gravitation is right. It is proved to be true, and

that is sufficient. Everyone, according to the ignorance or the knowledge that is in him, feels constrained to enquire whether the law of sacrifice as exemplified in the organic world is right. It is proved to be true, but that is not sufficient. Both as an intellectual and an ethical being, therefore, man has capacities which demand a response not met with in nature. Now it is not out of harmony with the order and constitution of the universe that a response to these capacities should be given. On the contrary, what would be out of harmony with, nay, in direct opposition to that order and constitution, so far as we understand it, would be the existence of capacities unresponded to. The personality of man, the fact that he is a self-conscious, intelligent, ethical being, raises in him questions to which an answer can only be given through a personal revelation, *i.e.*, "in terms of humanity," and the Incarnation, in claiming to give this answer, claims to fulfil, not to contravene, that order

and constitution of which man is the highest known manifestation.

“ Read, then, I would say, the book of Nature which is God’s book ; read especially its later chapters, when moral beings appear upon the scene ; you find it a plot without a *dénouement*, a complication without a solution, a first volume without a second. Study the Christ. He appears as the second volume of the Divine Word, in which the threads are being disentangled. The justifying principle emerges, the lines of incident are seen working towards a solution, the whole becomes intelligible and full of hope.” *

Thus the Incarnation, instead of being, as too many Christians even now regard it, an article of faith in order to accept which the voice of reason must be stifled, is the divine answer to that voice. It supplies, though as yet we can but dimly perceive the illimitable significance of such an acknowledgment, the one only possibility of true “ unification of

* Bampton Lectures for 1893, Rev. C. Gore, p. 53.

knowledge," for it teaches us to see definitely and certainly "all things in God,"—in God who is Himself the Principle of unity in that order which, since the Divine could be manifested under its conditions, is necessarily itself divine.

Having now considered in some detail (1) whether belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures entails a belief in occurrences which controvert the natural order, and (2) whether the Incarnation is or is not in harmony with the laws and constitution of that order, and having given a negative answer to the first, and an affirmative answer to the second, enquiry, we return to the main question: Does the Christian revelation afford a possibility for the mind of man to know? From the standpoint we have reached, it will be abundantly clear that the reply to this enquiry also must be in the affirmative. Facts in harmony with the known order and constitution of the universe, and purporting to

be historical,—open therefore to the ordinary methods of criticism and enquiry,—do undeniably afford such a possibility; and all those to whom Christ is indeed their living Lord and Guide, and not the mere dead “Founder of Christianity,” will do well to encourage such criticism and enquiry to the utmost. They have nothing at all to fear, but everything to hope, from the application of the scientific method to the facts of Revelation, because, being *facts*, they cannot ultimately be “explained away,” nor disproved, nor twisted out of their due proportion by any such application. It can only result,—as, thank God, it is already resulting,—in the setting free of fundamental truths from the accretions which have obscured them, and in opening our eyes to the growing weight of testimony borne by “nature” in its fullest and widest sense to “the faith delivered to the saints;” that faith into whose exhaustless signification increased knowledge of the order and constitution of the

universe can but enable us to penetrate farther and more surely. That temporary difficulties, perplexities, and uncertainties may arise, and have arisen, in the course of this supreme enquiry, is merely to say that, as in all other enquiries, patience, freedom from prejudice and from foregone conclusions, a candid and open mind, are absolutely necessary, and are difficult of attainment ; but, in proportion as they have been attained, the result of the investigation carried on from such opposite directions is not for a moment doubtful ; and the clearer, firmer, and more rational answer which is daily shaping itself to the minds of Christians who desire to give to themselves or to others a "reason concerning the hope that is in them," abundantly justifies the confidence with which the more thoughtful among them look upon the advance of Science and its relation to religious thought.

CHAPTER II.

MAN IN THE LIGHT OF EVOLUTION.

THE researches of the last fifty years have conclusively proved the occurrence of biological evolution, yet have left undecided many most important questions respecting the laws according to which it has taken place. It is not therefore bound up with any special theory as to its method, and two principal suggestions have been put forward with regard to the origin of man. One is the "Darwinian," thus briefly summarised by Dr. Wallace :

"Although, perhaps, nowhere distinctly formulated, his [Darwin's] whole argument tends to the conclusion that man's entire nature, and all his faculties, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual, have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals, in

the same manner and by the same general laws as his physical structure has been derived." *

And it is considered that this conclusion is distinctly materialistic, *i.e.*, does away with the necessity of belief in spirit or in the spiritual world at all.

The second view is held with unimportant modifications by nearly all those † who, though believing in man's physical derivation from lower forms of life, yet regard him as possessing faculties which cannot thus be accounted for, and which they refer to a spiritual origin, affirming that at some unknown stage of his development a "soul" was superadded to his animal structure, as though it were a crowning ornament to an edifice already built. "On the hypothesis of this

* Wallace's "Darwinism," p. 463.

† Not, however, by Professor Le Conte, whose work, "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," the present writer had not had the advantage of reading when the above statement was made.

spiritual nature," says Dr. Wallace, "*super-added* to the animal nature of man, we are able to understand much that is otherwise mysterious or unintelligible with regard to him." * But if the spiritual nature of man be the higher, (as all believers in what may be called the twofold origin of man allow and insist,) if it be true that the "whole purpose, the only *raison d'être* of the world,—with all its complexities of physical structure, with its grand geological progress, the slow evolution of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and the ultimate appearance of man,—was the development of the human spirit in association with the human body," † then that human spirit must be more than a mere addition to the body, and the link between the two is not adequately described by the term "association."

Were it not for our fatal habit of en-

* "Darwinism," p. 474.

† *Ibid.*, p. 477.

deavouring to reconcile the letter of Scripture with scientific facts by suggesting that the writers of the sacred books, and especially the writers of the Old Testament, really meant something quite different from what they said, and totally at variance with the knowledge they possessed, the first chapter of Genesis would lead us to a more reverent, a more elevating, and a more philosophical conception of the relationship between soul and body, — nay, between spirit and matter, — than this. For what we there find represented is the fact of the spiritual evolution of the universe, told in simple language indeed, and containing no scientific record of observed phenomena, but embodying clearly, unmistakably, and in words which will never grow obsolete, the central and eternal truth that the power of constructive change, of self-development through which cosmos grew out of chaos, was due to the communicated life of the Divine Spirit. The

order of evolution is not given us,—that man could gradually discover for himself, it falls within the province of scientific research ; the *origin* of evolution he could not discover—it must ever have lain buried in the region of the unknowable. This, therefore, since a knowledge of it was indispensable to man's right understanding of himself, and to the continued development of his higher faculties, was revealed by that same Spirit in whom he must in any case live and move and have his being, whether consciously or unconsciously.

It is the fact of his thus living and moving consciously which constitutes the all-important difference between him and the lower animals, not the false supposition that he is a "link" between the material and the spiritual, because all below him is pure matter, and all above him pure spirit. Such a notion implies a complete misapprehension as to the relationship between spirit and matter. Yet we are not without "object lessons," which might enable

us to attain to some clear and definite conception on the subject. The life of spirit is the intelligent self-conscious life of the thinking subject. A being whose life, like that of man, can be described in these terms is a spiritual being. In the life-history of the human individual, beginning at the unicellular stage and continuing to the fully-developed man, we have an illustration of the evolution of life through the unconscious to the conscious, and through the conscious to the self-conscious stage. The ovum is living indeed, but it is hardly if any more conscious than it lives than a crystal. The newly-born infant is conscious: it can feel, and see, and hear, but it can but very feebly distinguish between the self and the not-self, and certainly some months are employed in acquiring the power of making this distinction, and many subsequent months and years in perfecting it. Science teaches us to see in the life-history of the human individual the history of the human race " writ

small." Might we not extend our conception yet farther, and see in it not indeed the exact history, but some true indication of the history of the universe, of which the inorganic stage would correspond to the embryonic life of the man; and the various stages of the organic and the superorganic to the development of his conscious into his self-conscious life through infancy and childhood? In this manner we should everywhere learn to regard the material as the expression of the spiritual. Spirit (or, as some would prefer to say, mind,) would be seen to inform the entire universe which it moulds and develops in accordance with its own requirements.

"For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make." *

But if this be the relationship of spirit to matter,—and science is almost daily pressing upon us more irresistibly the conclusion that

* Spenser, "An Hymne to Beautie."

it is so,—the necessity for either a twofold origin, or a special creation of man, disappears. Where all lives with a spiritual life, the soul of man is not the exemplification of a new life, or the appearance of a new agent, but a different and higher manifestation of the same life, and a more intense and personal activity of the same agent. And in an order where matter is the universal expression of spirit, man is not a “link” between what is already united, but a fuller and more complete expression of the one by the other than is afforded by inorganic, or by vegetable, or by animal (as distinguished from human) existence.*

It is of importance to understand clearly

* A view apparently very similar to the above appears to be advocated by Dr. Wallace in the following passage: “These three stages of progress, from the inorganic world of matter and motion up to man, point clearly to an unseen universe, to a world of spirit, to which the world of matter is altogether subordinate. To this spiritual world we may refer the marvelously complex forces which we know as gravitation, cohesion, chemical force, radiant force, and electricity, without which the material universe could not exist for a moment in its present

wherein this conception agrees with and wherein it differs from the two already referred to,—the Darwinian, and that of a soul superadded at a certain stage to a body ready prepared for it. It agrees with Darwinism in stating that “man’s entire nature and all his faculties have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals;” but dissents from it in ascribing the whole animal and human development to a divinely communicated spiritual life, whose growing intensity was the moulding

form, and perhaps not at all, since without these, and perhaps others which may be termed atomic, it is doubtful whether matter itself could have any existence. And still more surely can we refer to it those progressive manifestations of life in the vegetable, the animal, and man, which we may classify as unconscious, conscious, and intellectual life, and which probably depend upon different degrees of spiritual influx (“Darwinism,” p. 476). There is, however, a far deeper difference between this position and that taken up in the text than at first sight appears, for if the latter be conceded, the statement that “the world of matter is altogether subordinate to the world of spirit” (as one kingdom is subordinated to another) is entirely insufficient. The “world of matter” has no existence apart from the “world of spirit,” for there is but one order, the spiritual, and to human intelligence it has but one expression, the material.

power *from the beginning* of those "lower forms" which would ultimately become man. By thus ascribing to spirit the formation and evolution of the body, all materialistic tendency is eliminated, and the existence and supremacy of spirit as strongly asserted as by the theory of the twofold origin itself, while the necessity for retaining that unscientific and unscriptural conception is done away with. On the one hand, the existence of something in man which materialism cannot account for is clearly acknowledged. On the other hand, that "something" which we may "best refer to as being of a spiritual essence or nature, capable of progressive development under favourable circumstances,"* is seen to have been in fact thus developing through the despised animal progenitors, which were but man in process of formation, and which during the earlier stages of his evolution afforded the requisite "favourable circumstances."

* "Darwinism," p. 474.

To arrive at a logical and consistent theory of the relationship between spirit and matter, or even to advance a few steps on the right road towards doing so, is an achievement which cannot be too earnestly desired, for the question of the derivation of the soul is no new difficulty.

“ In reference to the child born of human parents, it has been often discussed, Is its soul inherited like its bodily organism? or is it added to the body, coming, as it were, from without? The instincts of Christianity, rather than any formal decision, have throughout been against Traducianism or the physical derivation of the soul. On the other hand, Creationism guards a truth which Traducianism loses, but at the cost of separating body and soul in a way which neither the science nor the theology of the present day will find it easy to accept. . . . In the history of the individual, so far as his physical structure is concerned, science can trace each step, from the microscopic germ-cell to the fully developed man. If we believe that man as man is an immortal soul, though we cannot say when he became so, or that, strictly speaking, he ever did *become* so, we need not

be surprised to meet the difficulty again in the evolution of man from lower forms." *

It is not possible to propose any solution to this difficulty unless we define clearly what we mean by "man as man being an immortal soul." A very little reflection will show us that the real idea intended to be expressed is the persistence of personality after death, the continuance of "that main miracle that thou art thou, with power on thine own act and on the world," under conditions of which we know but little more than that they are wholly different from those in which the self-conscious life first began. Now personality cannot persist until it has been attained ; and though as we rise from grade to grade in the scale of organic life there are correspondingly clearer indications of what is to come, we do not find what can be truly characterised as the intelligent self-conscious

* "Science and the Faith," Aubrey Moore, p. 207.

life of the thinking subject below the human stage. Man, therefore, "became an immortal soul" when he became man, when in him arose "the power to say 'I am I!'" and since that power did indeed *arise*, developed gradually and imperceptibly, in individual and race alike, from unconscious to conscious, and from conscious to self-conscious, we are led to regard the whole "material development" of which man is the outcome, as the expression of a spiritual life, and to substitute the spiritual derivation of the body for that "physical derivation of the soul" which "the instincts of Christianity" have indeed been right in rejecting.

That there is a very close connection between man, and not only the "lower animals," but the whole creation, is clearly intimated in more than one passage of the New Testament, more especially in that remarkable declaration by St. Paul, that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of

the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together [or with us] until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 20-24, R.V.). Again, we are told that "if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body," and the two passages taken in conjunction seem to show that what St. Paul calls the "redemption of the body" is the attainment not only by man, but by the "whole creation," of that perfect expression of the spiritual through the material which from the Christian point of view must be the goal of all evolution ; since thus alone can the

Divine conception of the universe be made manifest.

Nor is what may be called the spiritual nature of the universe indicated by Scripture alone, for science is daily teaching with more distinctness that if the origin and evolution of the cosmos are to be explained by the properties of "matter," then matter must be something totally different from that "dead brute" essence which used to be considered an adequate conception of it. When we find one eminent physicist saying that "it is impossible to resist the conclusion that all nature is living thought, the language of One in whom we live and move and have our being ;"* and another that "it is conceivable matter may react on mind in a way we can at present only dimly imagine ; in fact, the barrier between the two may gradually melt

* Professor Fitzgerald, F.R.S., Lecture on "Electro-Magnetic Radiation," delivered at the Royal Institution on March 21st, 1890.


away as so many others have done,"* we cannot but feel that students of nature are being forced to realise that the "material" order, with which they regard themselves as exclusively dealing, is something more than material, and that the revelation of its "inner secret," if and when it is made to the minds that have reverently sought it, will not "degrade man to a level with the brutes," as has been so often ignorantly and faithlessly supposed, but will raise his estimation not only of organic but of inorganic nature, as being the necessary stages of an evolution which has resulted in the development of a being capable of exhibiting the "impress of the image of God."

And since this impress is manifested, since to man and to man only it is possible to enter into conscious relationship with the Source and

* Dr. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., Presidential Address to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association in 1891.

Fountain of his existence, we need not, as has already been pointed out, fear that the acceptance of the spiritual evolution of the universe would lead to the merging of each man's conscious life in that of the race, or of creation as a whole, so that the persistence of personality, of the distinctiveness of the spirit of man from that of his fellow-man, and from the Spirit of God which is the source of both, should be done away with. The unerring tendency of "that which drew from out the boundless deep" to "turn again home" implies no such death in life as this ; for human personality is the highest manifestation of spiritual life which the known universe exhibits. It is "nature risen into consciousness" of its relationship to the Divine, and there is no receding from this point. The course of evolution may conceivably lead to something higher than what we now know as personality, but this must still be included. Human life as it is, transcends, though it includes, that of the lower forms


through which it has developed ; human life as it will be, must include, though it may transcend, its present manifestation, otherwise it would no longer be a life of evolution ; and, for the very reason that human personality has a universal as well as an individual aspect, the persistence of each personal life is necessitated. Allowing that there is a universal human consciousness, a personality in which all partake,—which we must do if we regard mankind as an organic whole,—we are compelled to see that its existence depends on the distinctiveness of the parts. An organism presupposes a differentiation of organs. Unless we have these, we cannot have that, and a merging of the lines of delimitation between the organs, so that they are no longer distinguishable, means the death of the organism. There can be no universal human personality shared in by all men, unless there is in each man an individual personality, clear, sharp, and defined, whereby he is enabled to express some part of the whole, and



to subserve the general activity ; and for the very reason that no one human being is identically the same with any other, the disappearance of even a single individual life would be an irretrievable loss to the universal life. The mystery of personality is indeed so deep and far-reaching, that we cannot but feel it contains the ultimate key to most if not all of the problems which perplex us in our present stage of existence and of knowledge, and that in its human development it is the very hallmark of the Divine.

But the momentous question now arises, What place do the great facts of the Fall, the Incarnation, and the Redemption hold in such a view of human life as has here been put forward? If the evolution of man has been in process since "the beginning," and reaches in one unbroken line from the "dust of the earth" to his present development, how could the fall be possible? Why were the Incarnation and the redemption necessary?

The possibility,—nay, it might almost be said, the probability,—of the fall becomes at once evident on reflecting that when man had arrived at the stage when intelligence and will were developed, no further evolution could be possible save through intelligence and will. So long as the developing man was not yet actually man, had not yet attained to what we understand by the human mind and the human free will, so long was his evolution unconscious, and he himself an irresponsible being; but when this stage was reached he could no longer be so considered, for he saw, however dimly, a goal before him, towards which he might or might not spontaneously move. The motive power which should lead him towards it was the self-conscious will, but the self-conscious will was newly born and feeble; other parts of man's complex nature, the animal appetites and impulses, were stronger in proportion, and the will succumbed before them, becoming their slave, instead of their master. Then must have



followed a complete stoppage in the process of evolution ; in other words, the utter failure of the whole spiritual development—of the divine ideal, had it not been for the Redemption, whose very purpose was, by restoring the will to its proper function, to inaugurate the harmony of man's nature, and make a continuance of evolution possible.

That in the failure of the will lies the explanation of every individual fall is a matter of universal individual experience ; if of the individual, however, must it not be also that of the collective fall, the fall of the race ? The word "fall," nowhere used in Scripture to designate man's condition, is, moreover, apt to be misleading. The true significance of the teaching given in the second chapter of Genesis seems to be, that man passed out of a state of innocence,—*i.e.*, of unconsciousness of his own imperfection,—into a state of consciousness of it. There was very clearly an advance in knowledge, as the language used indicates,

“ He hath become as one of us, to know good and evil.” Knowing both he must learn freely to choose the good, and hence his long and yet unfinished education in the school of suffering and sorrow. Having entered into the divine knowledge, pain was to be his schoolmaster to lead him to the divine holiness.*

The redemption, then (if it may be reverently so said,) was necessitated by the fall; but the redemption was rendered possible by the Incarnation, and that was in no sense of the word a consequence of the fall. The reasons for that supreme manifestation would have been equally strong, equally cogent, if man's evolution had met with no check. The first of these reasons, viz., that by means of the Incarnation man attains to a knowledge of God which would not otherwise have been possible, has been already touched on in the introductory chapter, and will be referred to more at

* For a fuller and more detailed treatment of this subject see chapters vi. and vii.

length hereafter. The second reason lies in the fact that when once man had become possessed of intelligence and a free will, it was impossible for his further development to take place save through the co-operation of these highest faculties ; and in order to procure their co-operation the goal of his evolution must be revealed to him : he must be enabled to perceive with ever-growing distinctness that perfect type which is the divine conception of manhood. And since that divine conception is the "image of God," it was the image of God which was manifested, "the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance" (Heb. i. 3, R. V.). There needed indeed to be ages of preparation for the manifestation of this perfect type. In other words, the evolution of man, even after it had entered on the stage of "conscious relation with God," needed to arrive at a certain point before such a revelation could be made. It is not to the child that teaching adapted to the adolescent or to the

adult understanding can be given ; and not in the childhood of the race, even had the fall been escaped, could the revelation of the Divine Man have been vouchsafed. But the fall was not escaped, and the revelation made was to supply the needs not only of a race as yet incompletely developed, but of one in which had been established that principle of degeneration which, under the title of reversion, is so well known a feature of the lower forms of life, and which gives so far-reaching a meaning to, because it shows so far-reaching a necessity for, that "redemption of the body" already referred to.


The fact that the apprehension by man of the perfect type of his being, revealed by the Incarnation, has never as yet been more than partial, has never attained to an even approximate adequacy, is due to the present incompleteness of his development. The end of evolution cannot be fully understood until it is attained, though with each upward step a truer appre-

ciation becomes possible. Every individual Christian will endorse this fact as true with regard to his own spiritual perception. It is wider and fuller and more definite than it was, because his spiritual life is gradually developing,—but how far as yet from embracing the perfect ideal in its perfection and completeness;—and the spiritual history of the individual is but the spiritual history of the race in miniature.

There lies here an answer to those who see a great element of weakness, incompatible with its claim to a divine origin, in Christianity, because it has as yet done so little to raise the life of Christians, both individual and collective, to its own standard,—that is, to the standard of the life of Christ. The argument in reality tells the other way : an ideal easily and quickly reached is not what the lessons taught us, by that part of the divine order which comes within the cognisance of “natural” science, “would lead us to expect in that higher part

which is regarded as lying without its bounds." We have only to reflect on the unnumbered ages required for evolution, inorganic and organic, to attain its present stage of development, to be assured that if the super-organic evolution be indeed a continuance of that vast chain, it, too, will be the work, not of years, nor of hundreds, nor of thousands of years, but of time incalculable. Yet throughout its whole extent the perfect type exists potentially in all the intermediate stages by which it is more and more nearly approached, and if it did not thus exist, neither could they. There could be no development of an absent life.

The goal of man's evolution, the perfect type of manhood, is Christ. He exists and has always existed potentially in the race and in the individual, equally before and after His visible Incarnation, equally in the millions of those who do not, as in the far fewer millions of those who do, bear His name. In the strictest sense of the words He is the life of man, and



that in a far deeper and more intimate sense than He can be said to be the life of the rest of the universe ; for though the considerations brought forward in this chapter render what has been called the "cosmic significance of the Incarnation,"—the fact, namely, that it is the climax and keystone of the whole visible creation,—especially striking and forcible, nevertheless it must never be forgotten that the Christ-life as such is not the possession of any race below the human. Because it was "in the form of man" that the "climax and keystone" were reached ; because it is in him alone that evolution has attained the stage when the capacity for receiving the impress of the image of God is developed,—therefore in his race, and in no other, does the law of conformity to type mould each individual, whose will consents to and furthers the process (for the higher evolution requires this special modification of the general law), into the "likeness of Christ"—consciously if he be a

Christian ; unconsciously if, debarred from that privilege, he yet, obedient to the light within him, strives towards the highest that he perceives.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE RESPONSE TO HUMAN CAPACITY.

THE correspondence between organisms and their environments is not a fact which needs prolonged scientific research for its verification. A very superficial investigation suffices to demonstrate what closer study renders more evident and striking, so that the presence of any special capacity in plant, animal, or man becomes the certain assurance that there is something in the environment to meet the demand of which, directly or indirectly, it has been the predisposing cause; and the search for this something in cases where it does not at once present itself to our observation would be regarded as a reasonable employment of

our intellectual powers. Most frequently, however, the response of each special faculty to that part of the environment to which it is adapted is immediately perceptible. The existence of a breathing apparatus presupposes air to breathe, that of sensitiveness to light presupposes light, that of the human intellect subject-matter whereon to exercise it; and where consciousness is present the response made constitutes a veritable revelation to the conscious being whose capacity in that special direction is met and satisfied. The extent of the revelation must depend, of course, on the extent of the capacity. Thus, the revelation of light to the eye of a bat and the eye of an eagle is widely different indeed, yet in each case the capacity is for light, and the response made is by light. In the present chapter it is proposed to trace this universal sequence of capacity and response to capacity, in a region from which agnostic thought has excluded it; in other words, to show that a revelation of the Divine

to the human is as reasonable and as much to be expected as the revelation of light to the eye, because there is as true a capacity and response to capacity in the one case as in the other.

To say that there lies in the human a capacity for the Divine, is to say that there lies in the finite a capacity for the infinite; and here we at once find ourselves at issue with the philosophy which categorically denies any such possibility, because of the limitation of the finite, and whose ultimate dictum is contained in the words: "By continually seeking to know, and continually being thrown back on the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness that it is alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as the Unknowable."* The analogy already suggested of light and the eye may serve to show the untenability of this assertion of our necessary ignorance, for every student of

* "First Principles," xxxi., p. 113.

physics is well aware that, considered, not as the sensation given rise to in the brain by an external agent, but as that agent itself, the range of light, *i.e.*, of ethereal vibrations, is indefinitely more extended than that of the human eye, whose limits are those of the visible spectrum, and whose powers can be destroyed by too intense an action of that to which they exist to respond. Yet we do not imagine that because the range of the ethereal vibrations is almost infinitely greater than that of the human eye, the latter is, therefore, rendered unable to respond to any of them ; or, if we did so imagine, experience would soon correct the error. For, as a matter of fact, we *are* conscious of light, and this of itself is sufficient to show that the eye responds to a small number of those ethereal vibrations which, were its capacity sufficiently increased, it would perceive as light through the whole of their mighty range ; its inadequacy is a proof of limitation, but not of total blind-

ness.* In the same manner the inadequacy of any finite capacity for the infinite is no reason for denying the existence of such a capacity, but simply for acknowledging its limitation.† If we have an eye at all, however partial our knowledge may be, we can yet know light. If we have any capacity for the infinite at all, we can, to the extent of that capacity, know the infinite. Our first care must, therefore, be to enquire whether any such capacity indeed exists.

* It is interesting and suggestive to observe in this connection that, notwithstanding the limited response which the eye is capable of making to the ethereal vibrations, those to which it does respond suffice to reveal not only our earth itself in minutest detail, with all its teeming variety of life, but also the existence of the multitudinous worlds and suns which fill the expanse of heaven. Thus, in like manner, however small our capacity of response to the Divine may—nay, must—be, yet the revelation so straitly limited unveils not only the destiny of man, but the eternal majesty of God.

† As a matter of fact, in stating that all knowledge of the Infinite is impossible to the finite, we impose limitations on the former, and thus render it also finite. We state that there is something which the Infinite cannot do, viz., reveal Itself to the finite.

The fact which immediately presents itself for examination is one whose familiarity is apt to make us overlook its importance, viz., man's consciousness of his own limitations. He *knows* that he is finite ; and just as we are "near waking when we dream that we dream," so we are near to the infinite when we perceive the finitude of the finite. Nay, we are more than near to, we are in touch with it : for how else could we account for the transcending of our own limitations which a perception of them implies ?

"The effort to escape from the limits of the finite is possible only to a thought which in some way apprehends that which is not finite. To know our limits and to be striving against them, would be impossible if the infinite we sought were not in some way present to us ; nor could we ever be conscious of the 'world's constraint on our aspirant souls,' if we were really and entirely confined to our prison-house." *

"How could we have an idea of the infinite which

* "Evolution of Religion," vol. i., p. 101.

enabled us to see the defect of the finite without enabling us to see anything more? A consciousness which apprehends a limit must reach beyond it: it cannot be shut out from the positive knowledge of that which gives it the power to detect and look down upon its own finitude." *

To be striving against limits is an essentially human experience, nor can we conceive of any human being as better pleased that the limits should be retained than removed. He is a smaller, narrower self with them than he would be without them.† They impede his self-realisation, restrict the compass of his personality, cramp the expression of that mysterious *ego* which is the essential reality of his being; and could the whole range of what Mr. Spencer terms "the knowable" be present

* "Evolution of Religion," vol. i., p. 108.

† Archbishop Benson has finely pointed out in his "Communings of a Day" that much which we regard as limitation may be only a method of drawing out higher capabilities; but this does not invalidate the argument in the text—nay, rather strengthens it—for we use our limitations in order to transcend them.

to his consciousness at once, could the sweep of his thought embrace with full understanding all those "methods" of the infinite by which alone it is perceptible to him, he would yet feel that he had found no adequate response to that self which, despite all that a certain school of thought can say to the contrary, insists upon being more than a method, and, therefore, capable of knowing more than methods, and which, if regarded as such alone, becomes as incomprehensible as the unknowable itself.

That we cannot know ourselves is, in fact, an axiom of that same philosophy which asserts that we cannot know the infinite; and this dual exclusion from the field of knowledge possesses a significance which may well make us inquire closely into the necessity for regarding it as inevitable. "The cognition of self, properly so-called," Mr. Spencer tells us, "is absolutely negated by the laws of thought," because "the fundamental condition to all consciousness

. . . is the antithesis of subject and object. . . . The mental act in which self is known implies, like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If, then, the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives? Or, if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be which is thought of? Clearly a true cognition of self implies a state in which the knowing and known are one,—in which subject and object are identified;” and this, we are told, is “rightly held to be the annihilation of both.”* Thus we cannot know ourselves, because the laws of thought (contrary to all practical experience,) bind us to the conclusion that subject and object cannot be united without being identified. The “laws of thought” are also the barrier to our knowing the infinite, for thought “involves relation, difference, likeness. Whatever does not present each of these does not admit of cognition. And hence

* “First Principles,” § 20, p. 65.

we may say that the unconditioned, as presenting none of them, is trebly unthinkable." * The trebly unthinkable resolves itself, however, into one : for without difference we could discern neither likeness nor relation ; and we may, therefore, truly say that we know by differences, and that where these do not exist knowledge is impossible.

In both these assertions of our necessary ignorance a similar fallacy is to be found. Union is not identification, nor does reconciliation of differences imply their annihilation. In other matters we see this clearly enough. Truth does not cease to be one because it is many-sided, nor are the differences between musical notes obliterated because they are blent into a single harmonious chord, nor the seven colours of the solar spectrum annihilated because they unite to form a single ray of ordinary sunlight ; and, did we fail in these instances to recognise the possibility of union

* "First Principles," § 24, p. 89.

without identity and of difference without antagonism, truth, music, and light would be alike incomprehensible to us. With such examples before us it should not be difficult for us to realise that knowing and known may be one, and yet each preserve its own identity ; and that "an indefinite consciousness" of the infinite cannot represent the sum of our possible knowledge of it, if it is, indeed, the principle of unity which holds together subject and object, and is itself the consummation of that union.

Mr. Spencer himself, as Professor Caird has pointed out,* takes us a little way towards such a solution, when he makes the Infinite the presupposition of all our knowledge, "that which is beyond all differences ; and he brings this conception into special relation with the difference of matter and mind which he regards as including under it all other differences." But having reached this point he is unable

* "Evolution of Religion," vol. i., p. 116.

to go farther,—his own doctrine of the unknowable debars him from doing so; for to say that our reason can perceive, however dimly, a reconciliation in the Infinite between these ultimate differences, is to say that we know something about it, and this is impossible. To us it is a mere negation, a void in which everything is lost, and to which, if we turn for explanation, we are met only by a hopeless blank. Those who have read Professor Caird's "Evolution of Religion" will not need to be reminded of the alternative there set before them to this dreary abstraction. The Infinite is regarded not only as the presupposition of all our knowledge, the unknowable, whose existence the conditions of thought compel us to postulate, but also as the principle of unity, which reconciles (not obliterates) all the differences and apparent oppositions which are a consequence of our finitude, and most especially that ultimate difference of subject and object which includes all others. The

Infinite which is claimed by Mr. Spencer as the presupposition of all knowledge is equally claimed by Professor Caird as its end.* “And when we carry our life back to it, we do not submerge all our knowing and being in a gulf of nescience, but only bring it into relation with the principle by which it must ultimately be explained.”† We thus travel in a circle; but movement in a circle is none the less movement; and though we return to our starting-point, we do not return to it in the same condition as when we set out. We start with an unrecognised presupposition; we return with the data which are necessary to the ultimate explanation of our “knowing and being” by means of that principle which underlies them.

If, however we perceive in our self-conscious nature a union of subject and object, of knowing and known,—which, as a matter

* “*Evolution of Religion*,” vol. i., chaps. iv., v.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 135.

of fact, we do perceive,—and feel, despite its imperfection, to be of the very essence of personality ; and if we regard the Infinite as the principle of that union, and as realising it in a completeness of which but a faint foreshadowing is possible to beings whose self-knowledge is so feeble and inadequate as our own, then we are brought face to face with that capacity for the Infinite which we have asserted to be inherent in human nature. *It lies in personality*—that which by the test of persistence * is the ultimate reality of our being, persisting in each one of us as the basis of all that he appears to himself, or to others, amid every external and internal change, and too deep and far-reaching to find any response save in the Supreme Reality itself,—that which persists as the basis of all phenomena and all existence.

The position which we have reached, there-

* "Were Unconditioned Being itself present in thought, it could but be persistent."—"First Principles," § 46, p. 161.

fore, is that the proof of man's capacity for the Infinite is his consciousness of,—in other words, his power of transcending,—his own finitude; and that this power belongs to him because of the union between knowing and known, by virtue of which he is a personal being, possessed of self-conscious, intelligent life. Here, then, we perceive what is the range of human capacity with regard to the divine. Its limits coincide with the limits of personality. So much of the divine as can be thus expressed man is capable of responding to;* beyond this he is powerless, just as the eye can respond to so much of light as is revealed in the spectrum, but beyond this is blind; and we have no more reason for saying in the former case that man cannot know God at all because his knowledge is partial, than we have in the latter case for saying that the eye

* Not fully, of course, in his present stage of development, but with ever-increasing completeness as he approaches nearer to his perfect being.

can perceive no light because it can only perceive some.

• But if the capacity of the human for the divine lies in personality, and is limited by its limits, an indication is at once given us of the only kind of revelation possible for man to receive as adequate to his needs, and yet not transcending his comprehension ; and that is the revelation of a Person, for it is by his personality that he is stamped with the divine likeness and rendered, potentially at any rate, a son of God. And if the time-worn objection of anthropomorphism * be alleged against such


* This accusation is often brought against the wrong side. Is it not an exceedingly anthropomorphic conception to regard the Divine Being as "too great" to condescend to the low estate of man? With reference to this, Archbishop Benson makes the following remarks in connection with the subject of prayer:—"There is a common confusion between greatness and vagueness. When Heine said, 'The Supreme Being, perfectly omnipotent, and all-seeing if He existed, was too great to trouble Himself what a wretched little mouse in the Rue d'Amsterdam might believe,' it was he who was limiting the idea of the very God to whom he ascribed greatness. It was he who was denying that God was *All-seeing, All-powerful, All-*

a conclusion, the answer must be sought for in the considerations which have been already brought forward. The perfect union of knowing and known, the fully-realised principle of unity, exists only in the Divine Being. It is, therefore, not the anthropomorphic in God, but the theomorphic in man, that a study of personality leads us to perceive: so that the possibility of man's knowing himself depends upon the possibility of his knowing God, of his entering into communion with that Personal Source of his being, by virtue of whose transcendent and yet immanent selfhood he, too, is a self; and in whom that union of the knowing and known of which he is so imperfectly, yet so certainly, conscious in his own nature, is present as the fulness and power of an underived and inexhaustible life.

loving. It was he who substituted a vague, indefinite idea of large, but not unlimited, power of attention, for the unimaginable, though not incredible, attribute of omnipresence."—"Fishers of Men," p. 101.

From this point of view a new light is thrown upon that tendency to personify natural objects which we observe in children and in savages or uneducated persons ; and it assumes a different and a deeper meaning, than if we look on it solely as the rude effort of an uncultured intelligence, to explain natural phenomena by attributing them to the agency of beings superior in power indeed, but otherwise of "like passions with ourselves." The way in which the most highly civilised and cultured men,—and these not poets alone,—feel at times an irrepressible impulse to seek for a *response* in nature, shows how deep-seated is the tendency to regard it as the expression of mind. Nay, even our ordinary language reveals the same bent :—

"If the rock is stern, if the stream is joyous, if the star is mild, it is because the inner heart of nature is felt to speak through them, and hold communion with us ; and only in proportion as we lift the external world into this personal element can such language



appear justified. . . . That we give these words to things, and then first feel their true nature struck, only proves how ready we are to refer back all things to a Personal Being behind them." *

It is the fact that, to us, non-personal being is lacking in reality which gives us this readiness, this craving to come into contact with life as real as our own. We want to penetrate beyond the form to the substance of existence, and where we are baffled in doing so we fall back unsatisfied. In nature, of course, we cannot find what we seek, for all nature is below us. Even in our fellow-man we do not meet with the full response that we need, for though our equal, he is yet too restricted for us. Light to which the eye responds is greater than the eye,—a mightier life than the human can alone adequately meet and explain the human. Thus, one consequence of man's knowing,—and yet only partially knowing,—

* "Types of Ethical Theory," by James Martineau, vol. ii., p. 20.

himself is an extraordinary isolation, felt in varying degree by varying temperaments, but to some extent by all. There are depths in each man's nature unsuspected by any but himself,—nay, what is more awful to him still, there are depths which he himself cannot sound, before which “his mortal nature doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised;” and in one way alone can this utter solitude be relieved, and the touch of an all-comprehending and universal sympathy illuminate the mysterious recesses of the *ego*. It is by the revelation of a Personal Being to whom no personal life is strange; who, because He knows to the uttermost what is in man, can show man what is in Himself, and enable him to understand it; who, although His thoughts are not man's thoughts, nor His ways man's ways, nevertheless meets and interprets the ways and thoughts of man by unveiling His own.

Here, then, lies the necessity for another revelation than any nature can make, mirrored

forth by a familiar and frequent experience ; for we are well aware that no personality can ever become known to us by our own unaided efforts. If a fellow-man, even one with whom we are in daily contact, chooses to hide himself from us he can do so. To know a *person* implies some act on his part as well as on ours ; otherwise we may know *about* him, but we can never know *him*. How far more imperative does the necessity for this spontaneous unveiling become when the person to be revealed is not human but Divine ! Our own endeavours either in the field of scientific research or of philosophy can never do more than inform us of God's methods ; they cannot bring us face to face with God Himself. Even that inward enlightenment which consists in the gradual growth and expansion of the religious consciousness, the raising and purifying of its conceptions and aspirations, traceable through the long course of history, would of itself be insufficient to meet man's need, for it

would leave him without an object upon which to direct his illuminated vision. A definite, concrete expression of all that man can understand of God is as needful to him as the subjective development of the spiritual understanding, by which the meaning of such an expression can be grasped ; and the only true response to this need is the God-Man, who is at the same time the revelation of God to man and of man to himself as he exists in the divine ideal of manhood.

Failing such a manifestation as this, there has been no universal, because no personal, revelation of God at all. Man who is made in His image has never been given to see that image, save in broken lights and in disconnected parts. For what he needed was not only a vague assurance, based on subjective experience alone, that an indefinable union existed between "the Divine" and "the human," but the actual realisation of that union in One who should be both God and Man, and consequently

able to prove in His own person that man was made in the image of God, in whom we should have a "real knowledge of God expressed in terms of humanity."* Any interpretation of the "divine humanity of Jesus Christ" which falls short of this,—even one in many respects so deep and far-reaching as that given by Professor Caird in his "Evolution of Religion,"—does "take away that which is the necessary support to faith," and does not contain "all the elements of vital Christianity, all the elements in it that have really given support to the religious life of man in the past."† For the "elements of vital Christianity" may be summed up in one word, and that word is *Christ*—not in His teaching, divine and inspiring though it be; not in the sublime and simple records of His life, however great their spiritual power; not in the subsequent commentaries on that life, and development of

* Gore's "Bampton Lectures," p. 117.

† "Evolution of Religion," vol. ii., p. 232.

that teaching, found in the writings of His immediate disciples and followers, but in *Himself*; for He is not only the way to Life, He *is* the Life, the very principle of union between God and man, through whom that union is realised in us.

Regarding the Incarnation in this light, it is brought home to us as "God's eternal word to His creatures," reaching through and beyond all the boundaries of time. It precludes the possibility of thinking or speaking of Him who is the substance as well as the expression of the revelation which bears His name in the past tense, as the founder of a new faith merely. He is infinitely more than this. He is God's answer to the "age-long prayer" of conscious ignorance and weakness for light and power, of human personality for the Divine Person. And therefore it is that no recognition of Him, as the mere "typical expression" of the union between the Divine and the human, can either account for the facts

or represent the theory of Christianity. For this we must turn, not to a typical expression, but to a concrete fact,—“God manifested in the flesh,”—and to the effect produced by that fact as exemplified in “the living consciousness of union with Christ, and through Him with God, not only as His Father, but the Father of all men,”* which has existed and borne fruit throughout all the Christian ages,—not in the first only as the result of an evanescent fervour,—in the heart and lives of men.

And if it be regarded as touching on dangerous ground to make an appeal to “the personal experience” of Christians, the following consideration appears a sufficient answer: that if it be true that perfect “self-realisation” is the goal of human discipline and progress, and that “a self-conscious being cannot know what he really is, or realise his good save in utter self-surrender to God,”† then a consensus of the

* “Evolution of Religion,” vol. ii., p. 237.

† *Ibid*, vol. ii, p. 230.

experience of selfs, or, as it is more commonly called, of "personal experience" in the religious consciousness, becomes of supreme importance; and on no point is the consensus of Christian personal experience so strong as on this of union with Christ. By all Christians who are such in more than name, in all ages, Christ is felt and more or less adequately declared to be their stay, their strength, their support, the One who, because their nature is His, understands and enters into its deepest and most mysterious recesses; yet at the same time the One who reveals and expresses God to them, through whom the life of God is made theirs, and enabled to overcome, within and without them, all that is antagonistic to its fuller presence. Such an effect as this could not be produced by an individual who is only "*regarded* as the organ of a universal principle," or by "a universal principle which has incarnated itself" only "for perception and imagination in an individual life." Man is too

real a being to be nourished and developed on illusions, however striking and beautiful ; and what he needs, what in all religions he is feeling after, is consciousness of union with God, not with the abstract Divine, but with the Divine Personality, the Divine Self. This is a necessity, not only of the race at large, but of each one of those human selfs which make up the race ; and this is the "universal cry" to which the Christ-revelation responds, and responds with ever-increasing clearness, fulness, and power as the cry grows more definite, intelligent, and earnest.

And since at any time it is the aggregate of individual needs which makes up the needs of the race or of any portion of the race, we may well here indicate a wider and more comprehensive, yet no less definite and crucial, experimental test of the truth of the Christian revelation, than that to which attention was called in the introductory chapter. If Christ is indeed the answer to the age-long prayer

and expectation of mankind, then in the religion which bears His name we should look for a continued power of adaptation to all circumstances and classes, an assimilative and transformative action which should mark it out from all other faiths as essentially living and progressive. Do we find this? History answers the question in no uncertain voice.

A religion which at its birth could wake an answering response in Jew, Greek, and Roman, despite their widely different mental and moral constitution, a religion which could satisfy alike the demands of the most exalted philosophy and the humble requirements of slave and peasant, showed from the first a vital power comparable to nothing that had gone before it. Nor must we forget that at its origin it was the religion not of a conquering but of a small sect in a conquered race. It was not imposed, like Moham-
medanism, upon terrified and abject peoples as a *sine quâ non* of their existence, but permeated slowly from the lower strata of society to the

higher, from the peasants and fishermen of Judæa and Galilee to the throne of the Cæsars, adapting itself with truly marvellous versatility to extremes of thought and culture which seemed as if they had absolutely nothing in common. Even the tide of corruption and debasement, with which its apparent triumph threatened to overwhelm it, was powerless to effect more than a fresh and astounding proof of its vigorous life. The Roman Empire sank in ruins, but the religion which might have been supposed to stand or fall with it, rose renewed and strengthened in the very midst of the barbarian tribes themselves, working with greater might among those stern and savage warriors than it had done in the effete civilisation which they had supplanted. In Ireland, in Britain, in Germany, in Gaul, Christianity became the national faith, and when fresh hordes of invaders swept down from the North, and ruthlessly snatched at material conquest, they, too, became spiritual captives. Not once,

but again and again did the old story repeat itself, and the faith of the vanquished became that of the victors. We shall look in vain for a parallel to this in the history of any other religion, the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest" has never had a more striking illustration.

Nor does the lesson stop here, for as every change of environment called for fresh adaptation, it brought into action new and unsuspected powers of organic development. A pause in one direction meant an advance in another.

"Christianity might well have perished more than once. It might have died outright of the public and astonishing wickedness of the Roman court in the tenth century. It might have been crushed out of being by the hordes of Islam in the first flush of their conquests, or by the great Turkish Sultans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It might have sunk beneath the accumulated weight of corruption which invited the Reformation; it might have disappeared amid the Babel of self-contradicting voices

which that Reformation itself produced. At one time it was threatened with death by the relation of the Church to corrupt or absolute governments; at another by the rash levity, or by the dishonest enterprises of speculative and unbelieving theologians. Men said that the Church was killed under Decius and Diocletian; they said so again with greater confidence after the literary blasphemies and moral outrages of the first French Revolution. But practically each reverse, each collapse, each period of sickness and decline, is followed by revival, reinvigoration, victory.”*

Yes; but before the victory was gained, before the reinvigoration was perceptible, before the revival had determined itself, what confusion, what indistinctness, what incoherence obtained, so that to predict the outcome of order, clearness, width, and definiteness from that “Babel of voices” was a thing impossible to many, perhaps to the majority of Christians. Yet looking back we can see that the great transition stages, attended as they

* Liddon, “Easter Sermons,” vol. i., p. 130.

were, and as all transition stages ever must be, by a vagueness of outline and disproportion of parts which made the issue appear to those who were passing through them almost worse than doubtful, were nevertheless stages of growth.

The outcome of the Reformation was a respect for truth as truth, a sense of individual responsibility and individual relationship to the great Head of the Church, which had been well-nigh stifled under the weight of sacerdotalism.

The outcome of the French Revolution, despite all its extravagances, horrors, and burlesques, has been a growing conviction, gradually, amid many mistakes, false departures, faint-hearted abandonments, taking practical form, that the Christian doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man have a deeper and more far-reaching meaning than has ever yet been realised by those who have professed a belief in them, and

that the remedy for cruel social evils, barbarous political anomalies, and hateful international jealousies, lies here or nowhere.

- But we, too, are passing through a transition stage. Before we have well grasped the fact that the last was an advance, though a painful one, while the bearing of much, perhaps most, that we inherit from it yet remains to be fully understood and worked out, the next is upon us. It is an intellectual and moral chaos that the faint-hearted now dread ; it is before the invading armies of scientific discovery that they fear to see Christianity go down, unable to satisfy the new requirements springing up on every side, overpowered at last by the complexity of the environment to whose conditions it must adapt itself or die. And at first sight it seems as though such fears were but too justifiable. The old landmarks are giving way, theories of the universe, interpretations of life, differing widely from those our fathers held sacred, are pressed upon us, and we feel they are gaining

ground, that there is truth in them, though there may be error as well, and therefore that we cannot stand against them ; they will conquer us. Perhaps they will. In so far as they are true they must do so, and we ought not to wish it otherwise ; but there are not wanting signs that in the very act of conquest the faith in which we have so little confidence will exercise its selective power, and transform them into another and a higher likeness. All that is true, and therefore essential and eternal, it will absorb ; all that is false, and therefore accidental and temporary, it will reject ; but while this double process of absorption and rejection is going on, while fresh and unforeseen developments are in progress, the incoherence which characterises all epochs of change will make itself felt in conflicting doctrines, opposing lines of thought, the advance of apparently irreconcilable claims and counter-claims on one side and the other. A very "Babel of voices" indeed ! Yet amid the

confusion it is patent to all who are not wilfully blind that once again the change is of growth, not decay ; and it is possible to foreshadow the direction in which new development will be the outcome of a revolution of thought more complete and far-reaching than perhaps any that has preceded it. The scientific discoveries, the moral and intellectual conflicts of the nineteenth century, will lead men far on to the practical understanding of what revelation really means : that not in inspired records alone, not in history alone, nor in the heart of man alone, nor in nature alone, but in each and all is the revelation of God continually proceeding ; that the scope of this revelation is coincident with the scope of man's sensuous, intellectual, and moral perceptions, and that it widens as his faculties and his knowledge widen.

Thus returning to the more individual standpoint from which we started, it may well prove that the outcome of all the strife, contention, and loud-voiced agnosticism of the present day

will culminate in a more general and at the same time a more individual "consciousness of union with Christ and through Him with God," than has ever yet been attained in any age, save by exceptional Christians. Nothing less will set at rest the uneasy scepticism and the unsatisfied longings of the present day; nor will the conflict cease till it has issued,—as in times so pervaded by the scientific spirit it cannot but issue,—in that appeal to experiment to which we have already referred,* in the ascertaining of each man for himself, not what Christ *was*, but what He *is*. With a living Person we can enter into direct communication, and the proof of His existence can never be primarily historical; neither is the ingress to man's consciousness confined to the channels of the senses alone. To see, to hear, to touch is not everything,—nay, it is very little,—in the intercourse between personal beings, as the sad and too frequent occurrence of close

* See chap. i., pp. 45-9.

external relationship and wide internal separation abundantly testifies. Remembering that His claim of whom we speak is not only to be Himself a Person, but to be the Source and Reason of all personal existence, the conviction that if such be indeed the case there can be no barrier between him and any individual of the race which, through Him, has emerged from the long course of "material" development into the self-conscious spiritual life of man, becomes rooted and unconquerable certainty. The whole gist of the matter lies in the words "*if such be indeed the case*;" and just because man is a personal being it is the personal proof he needs,*—the proof which can be given to each one, and to each one alone, out of all the multitudes of his kind, which penetrates through his isolation, and, by showing him that he is known, enables him also to know, thus bringing him out of the darkness of his individual solitude into the very light of God, the

* See chap. i., p. 48.

light of conscious sonship to the Divine Father, and conscious brotherhood with his fellow-men. Few persons have either time or inclination to wade through masses of polemic, to study and classify the results of "the higher criticism;" but every man, if he have even the faintest suspicion that Christ is more than the mere "Founder of Christianity," that He is the living bond of union between God and men, through whom alone the knowledge of God is possible, can put his suspicion to the test, and can be encouraged in so doing by giving as much credence to those who in this supreme matter declare, "We *know* in whom we have believed," as he would to equally reliable witnesses in other lower branches of knowledge.

"Probability in such a case takes its proper place, not as the miserable substitute for personal certainty, but the preliminary reason for approach to, and personal contact with, Him who is now actually the Way, the Truth, and the Life; a function which it [probability] has always discharged, and which it

must continue to discharge, with regard to every form of concrete reality. Probabilities are quite sufficient warrant for men seeking God, for men seeking Christ ; but if God is real, if Christ is real, certainty can only be given by God Himself, by Christ Himself. This is according to the law of our constitution. Certainty as to reals can only be found in the reals themselves."*

* "The Idealistic Remedy for Religious Doubt:" Professor W. D. Simon, *Contemporary Review*, December 1892.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONALITY AS THE OUTCOME OF EVOLUTION.

I N the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to show that there is a true capacity in the human for the Divine, and that this capacity lies in and is defined by personality. Each man, because he is a person, a self in whom the union of knowing and known is accomplished, holds therein a proof that his nature transcends the finite, and demands for its complete realisation a response from the infinite. To this response we gave the name of revelation, and saw that, to be adequate, it must be the revelation of a person, because no other form of being could fully respond to human need and yet not transcend human

comprehension. But it must have been felt that from one important point of view the presentation of the subject was wholly incomplete. It took account of man alone, and made no mention of the order to which he belongs ; and such treatment of him in the present stage of scientific knowledge has become impossible. "For good or ill man is bound to the universe," as intrinsically as any of the lower forms of life which were his own previous stages, or as the inorganic elements from which these lower forms themselves hold their unexplained derivation ; and any theory of his nature which separates him, save by recognition of his higher development, from the rest of creation, contains within itself its own sentence of death. It becomes therefore imperative to inquire whether the stress laid on personality as the clue to man's right understanding of himself, and of his relation to that Power by which he exists, is open to the fatal objection above stated.

In the first place, we must remark that though personality is a pre-eminent, it cannot be regarded as an exclusive, characteristic of man. All the lower animals, even the lowest, have some consciousness that they are "other than the things they touch ;" and though we must ascend far in the scale of organised being before we can venture to assert that this mere consciousness shows signs of rising into *self*-consciousness as human experience teaches us to understand it, yet none the less is it true that from the first moment when the first lowly organism felt, in however crude a form, that it was distinct from its environment, a process of development commenced whose present stage is perhaps as far removed from its ultimate goal as from its almost unrecognisable origin. To regard personality as the result of evolution, however, may not impossibly cause a shock to the minds of many, as though that capacity for the Divine, which is the pledge of their sonship to God, were degraded by having become

theirs through long stages of development, instead of being received, as they suppose, more directly from Him.

The readjustment of the mental attitude rendered necessary from time to time by the discovery of truths of high significance, bearing upon the deepest problems of life, is always a painful process, and this is more especially the case when the need for such a readjustment shows us that our faith as well as our reason needs enlightening and expanding. There is always a tendency to crystallisation in the minds of men, to lock into set and rigid shapes both their knowledge and their beliefs; and consequently, when the contents of either or of both become too great to be adequately expressed in the old forms, the latter are burst asunder with a violence which seems at first rather the consequence of disintegration than of development. After a time, however, order reappears through the confusion, and we perceive that the process which we so greatly feared, far from entailing

loss, has resulted in the removal of limitations, and the consequent widening of our intellectual and spiritual horizon.

The principal readjustment required in the present instance is in our conception of matter ; for if personality be the result of what is called material development, it is very evident that matter must be possessed of an essentially different nature from that which we have hitherto been content to bestow on it. Some authorities indeed boldly declare this to be the case, and would have us see in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," and to this no exception need be taken, so long as we are careful to define what we mean by "promise and potency." The "promise and potency" of the oak lies in the acorn. Why? Because the acorn is living. The "promise and potency" of the fully developed animal lies in the embryo. Why? Because the embryo is living. In both these cases, and in any others which can be adduced from organic nature, it is life which

is the real "promise and potency," for without it no development would be possible. To say, therefore, that the "promise and potency of all terrestrial life" lies in matter, is simply to state that matter is living, for life can only come from life. If asked what is the kind of life, we must point to its highest known development in order to reply, and that highest development is man. Human nature, as the ultimate outcome of "material" evolution, contains the only key to the interpretation of matter. Unless we find it here, we shall find it nowhere. To look for it in lower organisms, or anywhere in inorganic nature, is futile ; we might as well think to understand vegetable life by handling a packet of seeds. But if we have the courage to say : This far-reaching intelligence, this unconquerable will, this undying love, this boundless aspiration, are what matter is capable of ; they are what has been slowly evolved through countless ages out of that primordial substance, if substance it may be called, which as truly

contained the germ of every subsequent manifestation of its ever-developing life as the seed contains the germ of the "blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear," or the rudimentary cell the germ of the "human form divine," materialism takes upon itself a different aspect indeed, and seems to require another name altogether. Matter can only have attained to this marvellous development by reason of the life which was in it, and that life is what in its highest manifestation we have agreed to call "spiritual," meaning thereby the intelligent, self-conscious life of the thinking subject. If we choose henceforth to call this life "material," we only by so doing assert in the strongest terms that, in the ancient sense of the word, no such thing as matter exists, for we have endowed it with all the properties comprehended under the category of spirit. We cannot deny these properties, because they stare us in the face; but we can, if we so desire, make confusion worse confounded by including under the same

head the universal life and the form which it takes. This is what we do when we say that "matter is the promise and potency of all terrestrial life ;" the words are only an incoherent expression of the obvious truism that life is the "promise and potency" of further life, and they spiritualise matter far more than they materialise spirit.

Let it then be allowed that the highest human faculties, nay, that which is more than any or all of them combined, because it is that of which they are attributes—personality—arose through evolution, and what follows? It follows that since the whole course of evolution has conspired to produce and to assign this predominant place to personality, personality was implicitly present throughout all the stages of "material" development. The birth for which nature has travailed is the birth of personality, the "assemblage of various forces operating blindly" has been guided throughout its immeasurable range of action by informing

mind, not yet conscious of itself, but tending ever to become so. The mystery of man and the mystery of the universe are therefore indeed one, and in man do we first receive a hint of its solution, because in him does personality first become explicit ; in him alone do we see knowing and known united.

This human imperfect union is, however, but the indication of a union which transcends though it includes the human, and which is the fountain of all life and knowledge. The words : " In Him we live, and move, and have our being," words whose literal truth every fresh discovery of science enables us to perceive more clearly, contain the only adequate explanation of the two fundamental facts of all existence, the origin and development of that order whose culmination is man's conscious sonship to God. Of the former, we are told by modern agnosticism that we can know positively nothing. " The creation of matter is inconceivable, implies a relation in thought between some-

thing and nothing,—a relation of which one term is absent, an impossible relation.” But this impossible relation is implied only if we regard the difference between subject and object, either as an impassable gulf not bridged over even in the divine nature, or as so fused in the latter as to be a difference no longer, subject and object losing all distinctiveness, and becoming merged in a vast abstraction of being of which nothing positive can be predicated. If instead of this we regard the divine nature as the all-embracing principle of unity, reconciling these opposite but not antagonistic conditions of thought and existence, so that they are blent into one perfect whole, the inconceivability of creation disappears ; *

* It is, however, earnestly desired to deprecate the possible misconception that the writer's intention is to “explain” creation. Not even Mr. Spencer could more strongly realise the futility of such an attempt. “For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” may be as true and deep a conviction of the Christian heart and intellect with regard to the Supreme Being as of the agnostic with regard to the Unknowable. But to say that creation is conceivable, is by no means the same

for there is no longer any necessity to postulate a relation in thought between "something and nothing." The relation is between two equally essential realities, the divine thought and its expression. A relation which is divine must be eternal; and we are therefore led to the conclusion of the eternity of matter *not in spite of*, but *because of*, the eternity of God. When we speak of creation, therefore, we should refer, not to the creation of matter, but to the bringing into existence of that order to which

thing as to say that we "know how it was done." We can conceive the motions of the celestial bodies, we can even formulate the laws regulating those motions, but he whose conception of the stellar universe is the most adequate is he who is most able to perceive how far that conception is from embracing the whole truth; how little he knows in comparison with what there is to be known; and the reservations we must make with regard to such knowledge as this are as nothing compared to the reservations forced upon us in venturing to assert that we know anything about creation. Nevertheless, it is an imperative duty in these days to give a "reason of the hope that is in us," to say why to us creation is not inconceivable, and in thus exercising the intellect on matters which are not for that the less matters of faith, we do but obey the apostolic injunction, "Be not children in mind . . . in mind be ye men."

we belong, and which is one development of matter, or of the divine expression of the divine thought under, as appears to us, self-imposed limitations.

Regarding creation in this light, the whole course of material development takes a new and majestic meaning, for we see that the material is no less spiritual than the spiritual itself, the one being the expression of the other; and many facts which are hard of comprehension and a bar to faith when we are driven, on the hypothesis of the hard-and-fast division, or even antagonism between spirit and matter, to attribute a twofold origin to man,—a physical derivation from lower forms of life, and a spiritual derivation from the “Father of spirits,”—fall into their true place when we look upon the whole “progressive life” of nature as a single Divine development. We may take an example from biological science by way of illustration.

Mr. Wallace, in his work on "Darwinism," thus states, in the chapter devoted to "Darwinism applied to Man," the argument from continuity :

"Mr. Darwin's mode of argument consists in showing that the rudiments of most, if not all, the mental and moral faculties of man can be detected in some animals. The manifestations of intelligence, amounting in some cases to distinct acts of reasoning in many animals, are adduced as exhibiting in a much less degree the intelligence and reasoning of man. Instances of curiosity, imitation, attention, wonder, are given ; while examples are also adduced which may be interpreted as proving that animals exhibit kindness to their fellows, or manifest pride, contempt, and shame. Some are said to have the rudiments of language, because they utter several different sounds, each of which has a definite meaning to their fellows, or to their young ; others, the rudiments of arithmetic, because they seem to count and remember up to three, four, or even five. A sense of beauty is attributed to them on account of their own bright colours, or the use of coloured objects in their nests ; while dogs, cats, and horses are said to have imagination, because they appear to

be disturbed by dreams. Even some distant approach to the rudiments of religion is said to be found in the deep love and complete submission of the dog to his master." *

Now Mr. Wallace, in common with nearly all those who, though evolutionists, are nevertheless convinced that at some stage of man's development a "spiritual nature was *super-added* to his animal nature," considers it incumbent on him to show that there are faculties in man of which no rudiments can be found in the lower animals; and this he proceeds to do with great ability by adducing as instances the mathematical, musical, and artistic faculties, which he claims to have shown, by two distinct lines of argument, to be "in their mode of origin, their function and their variations, altogether distinct from those other characters and faculties which are essential to him [man], and which have been

* Wallace's "Darwinism," pp. 461, 462.

brought to their actual state of efficiency by the necessities of their existence." * Whether Mr. Wallace's arguments are or are not refutable, is of supreme importance if we regard man as the sole exemplification of spiritual life; it is absolutely immaterial if we regard him as the highest manifestation of a spiritual life which is universal; for then the question whether the same life is known under the same kind of manifestations throughout the whole course of evolution, or under different kinds of manifestations at different stages of it, sinks into insignificance when brought into the light of the central and eternal truth, that whatever be its manifestations it is still the same, and is returning through an ever-ascending scale to its divine and eternal source.

But if the origin and goal of the universe be indeed God, if in Him we see the alpha and omega of that order which derives its

* Wallace's "Darwinism," p. 462.

existence from Him, then where is the shock to faith in applying the principle of evolution to account for the whole nature of man? Since we came from God, can it be of importance, save as an education, through what stages or through how many we return to Him? Since "the final outcome of that speculation commenced by the primitive man is that the power manifested throughout the world distinguished as material, is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness,"*—in other words, since the life of the universe as well as the life of man is a spiritual life,—why need we seek for a separate origin for man? This is no "gospel of dirt," as it was ignorantly called before the true bearing of evolution on previous knowledge and beliefs was understood; it is the shedding of a flood of light upon that older revelation given empirically in the childhood of the race, but which long ago led men to that "faith in the

* Herbert Spencer's "Ecclesiastical Institutions."

intelligibility of the universe"* through which all the victories of science have been won, and the depth and fulness of whose meaning was never so apparent as it has become in these days of increased and increasing knowledge, if we do but consent not to set bounds to the truth of God. But, alas! many of us fail to see that a divine revelation which is indeed such, must illuminate the whole range of nature and of man. Nothing can be left outside of it, nothing be untouched by its transforming power; for if it is personality in which lies the capacity for conscious sonship to God, and if personality is the outcome of evolution, then the whole history of that evolution, every fresh fact we can learn about it, every further truth we can discover, is nothing

* "And I say, have faith in the intelligibility of the universe. Intelligibility has been the great creed in the strength of which all intellectual advance has been attempted, and all scientific progress made."—Dr. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., Presidential Address to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association, 1891.

less than an extension of revelation, enabling us to take wider and deeper hold on the central fact of all revelation, the true Fatherhood of God, as exemplified in the manifestation under the conditions of the universal order of Him who is its life.

Thus the great truth forces itself upon us with ever-increasing clearness, that man is the interpretation of the universe which he knows and to which he belongs, for it is only when his self-conscious and intelligent life emerges into view that the Godward tendency of the whole creation is made apparent; and the gospel which unveils to him the deepest mystery of spiritual being is the gospel which assures him of the union of the human with the Divine, and consequently of the natural with the Divine. When, therefore, we speak of the "life of nature being a means to the higher life of spirit,"* the word "higher" should be used only in the sense of

* Caird's "Evolution of Religion," vol. ii., p. 117.

more perfectly developed. If nature lives with a spiritual life, and *the immanence of God means this*, it is not a higher *kind* of life, but a higher manifestation of the same kind of life, that we find in nature risen into human self-consciousness. "Of Him, and by Him, and unto Him," are all things, not some things, or some beings more than others ; but in man alone is developed the capacity of understanding his origin and destiny, and of co-operating intelligently and voluntarily in his own further evolution. In God is life for the whole universe, but to man alone is that life also light ; and as he (individually or collectively,) develops towards his perfect being, so does that light become greater, showing "all things new" to him as he gradually perceives them more adequately and truly. At first he is in the condition of the partially healed blind man, who saw "men as trees walking," but who, as his cure progressed, became able to distinguish not only

men from trees, but men from one another, beholding all objects in their true order and relationship. So not once, but many times in the history of the individual and the race alike, do "old things pass away and all things become new." The enlightened and purified vision growing clearer and stronger, enables us, by means of the things which appear, to penetrate with ever closer approximation into the glory of "the things that are," till we perceive that the latter are the inner truth and reality of the former,—not, as so many of our teachers would have us believe, unknowable and inconceivable abstractions of which we are only conscious through a haunting unrest and dissatisfaction in illusions from which we cannot escape.

And this fact, that the light of life is given to man alone, removes what might be to many minds a great and serious difficulty in regarding personality as the outcome of evolution ; for otherwise it might seem that if human

self-conscious life is the product of nature, if it be true that "the power manifested throughout the world distinguished as material, is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness," then there is no pledge of the individual continuance of that personality, for its appearance may be nothing more than a transient form of the "Omnipresent Energy" which is the cause of every natural manifestation. To this the answer is: Human personality in its parts, equally as in the whole, is in possession of that which cannot die, life in conscious communion with God.* If eternal life consists, as our Lord

* It may be said that there are millions who are not so conscious, but we must remember that there are degrees in consciousness. It is possible to be conscious, and yet not know of what we are conscious, as the case of every young infant exemplifies. Thus man can be conscious of God and not know it. Every effort, be it that of the most uncultured savage or the profoundest philosopher, to penetrate beyond the things of time and sense, is caused by a consciousness of God; every homage of agnostic thought to the supreme majesty of the Unknowable; every secret accusation of the conscience brought against sins and shortcomings of which none but the accused will ever be

tells us, in the knowledge of God, then eternal life in the true sense of the word cannot exist below the human stage, for until that is reached there is not even the capacity for such knowledge. The potentiality of the capacity may exist, but that is not the capacity itself; and a being in whom it is developed is more widely removed from his nearest ape ancestor than the latter is from those marvellous forms of inorganic structure which seem to give us the first direct hint of the vitality of matter. The spirit which returns to God who gave it, does not return as it came forth. It emerged from Him, how far back we may not venture to surmise, as the life-principle of that order which is its expression, full of divine "promise and potency,"

cognisant, is caused by a consciousness of God: and He who doth not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, will, through that personal course of discipline and training from which none can be exempted, develop into its full power and beauty that consciousness of Himself which is the stamp of personal, and therefore of human, life.

but unconscious of its origin and undifferentiated in its activities. It returns to Him in the perfected form of perfected human personality, which, as an organic whole, can only reach and realise its completeness by the full and entire development and persistence of each one of those separate self-conscious beings which are its constituent parts.

We are thus led, no less by the conclusion forced upon us that personality is the outcome of evolution than by a due consideration of its meaning, to a far firmer and deeper, because more rational, grasp upon the great truth of the Incarnation than has been possible before the present stage of scientific knowledge. Its "cosmic significance," almost lost sight of during and subsequent to the Middle Ages, was, even in the times of the early Christian Fathers, whose hold upon it gave man his first glimpse into the organic unity of creation, more intuitive than reasoned, and may be compared to the insight which men of scientific

genius have shown into principles which were yet not completely verified, nor seen in their true application and connection till increased knowledge enabled them to be more perfectly elucidated. But we who live in the full light of those magnificent discoveries and generalisations which are the glory of the nineteenth century, we to whom the organic unity of creation is not a matter of faith but of demonstration,—we can unhesitatingly avow that not alone the intuitive perception of the religious consciousness, but the calm decision of the intellect, enables us to take our stand upon the undeniable truth, that “if a theomorphic view of man be of the essence of a Christian’s faith,” it is no less the essence of a rational comprehension of that order whose culmination and representative he is, and the expression of whose hope is found in the faith to which such noble utterance has been given by Charles Kingsley: “Out of God’s boundless bosom, the fount of life, we came; through selfish,

stormy youth and contrite tears—just not too late ; through manhood not altogether useless ; through slow and chill old age, we return whence we came, to the bosom of God once more, to go forth again with fresh knowledge and fresh powers to nobler work. Amen.”

CHAPTER V.

SPIRIT AND MATTER.

IT has been observed in a former chapter that to attain some true insight into the relationship between spirit and matter, or even to advance a few steps on the road towards doing so, is a result which cannot be too earnestly desired because it affects our whole conception of man and of his destiny. What that relationship was formerly, and is too often now supposed to be, is indicated in the following sentence from Professor Noiré's introduction to Professor Max Müller's translation of the "Critique of Pure Reason": "Leibnitz believed himself to have been the first to solve the *eternal opposition* between mind and matter." Even those who have but a slight acquaintance with

philosophy can hardly fail to be struck with the persistent manner in which they are confronted with this "eternal opposition." In much of the ancient philosophy it takes the form of regarding matter as the root of all evil, and the human body as a mere degrading prison-house to the soul whose tenement it is, thus broadening and deepening to the utmost extent the division conceived to exist between them.

"The Platonic dualism," says Professor Noiré, "served to accentuate the chasm between the world of ideas and the world of phenomena, a difficulty which presents the real crux of modern philosophy. Plato's plan was to allow the phenomena to become absorbed in the ideas while the material world was banished to the realms of non-existence. But this is evading, not solving the difficulty, for in all that Plato himself predicates of matter we recognise qualities that only belong to something which has a real existence. That matter opposes itself to the formative power of spirit ; that it is that wherein the Maker of the world reproduces the ideas as a mechanic works upon his

material; that it is not merely an impediment to knowledge by its mutability and diffusion in space; but that it actually sets itself, as a bad ungodly principle, in direct antagonism to the creative cosmic forces—these are too grave accusations to be directed against what does not exist.” *

Matter was at an equal discount with the mediæval philosophers. They regarded it as contemptible and evil, failing to see how high a value their Christian faith should have taught them to place on it. The dualism of Descartes, who may be regarded as the true father of modern philosophy, did not indeed deny *reality* to matter, but caused him to draw the line of demarcation between it and spirit as sharply as any of his predecessors; for he regarded the external world as ruled by mechanical principles only, looking upon animals as automata, and reserving to man alone the possession of mind. The connection between the spiritual and the material in

* Introduction to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," p. 52.

human nature, Descartes regarded as purely arbitrary, and sustained by a direct act of volition on the part of the Creator, repeated each time that the bodily powers of man were called into action by his soul,—in fact, the only way out of the difficulty raised by a belief in the independent existence of mind and matter, was to postulate a continuous series of miracles, and this Descartes accordingly did.

The form which dualism has taken in the present day is perhaps best represented by Mr. Herbert Spencer, who tells us that we can reduce the whole universe to mind, or the whole universe to matter, but that either reduction is unsatisfactory, because it excludes the other, which, despite the exigencies of theory, reasserts itself in practice, yet can never arrive at any rational mode of reconciliation with the antagonistic view. The Spencerian philosophy represents, however, only one school of thought, and that not the

highest. Kant and his successors have shown us a more excellent way, and have pointed to the true solution of the problem by directing us to the conclusion that nature, or the material universe, is not the antithesis but the expression of spirit ; while science, in her turn, and despite her supposed materialistic tendency, has been aiding to bring about "this ultimate synthesis in which man and nature are regarded as the manifestation of one spiritual principle," * by demonstrating with ever-increasing clearness the indissoluble union of the two, yet acknowledging by the mouth of some of her most honoured representatives that there is an element in both which is not comprehensible through the laws of matter.†

* "Essays on Literature and Philosophy," Professor E. Caird, p. 581.

† In this connection it may be interesting to refer to a discussion in the Biological Section of the British Association in 1893, in which (according to the *Times* report) Professor Cleland said that there were things which were not to be accounted for [in biology] upon chemical or physiological principles, and sug-

We may observe, however, that there is nothing antagonistic to the "laws of matter" in the existence of such an element; simply the latter cannot be accounted for by the former, that is all, and is either consciously or unconsciously assumed, because the laws of matter could not otherwise be satisfactorily enunciated. In the domain of physics proper,—*i.e.*, in the science of inorganic matter,—Force is the inexplicable element. It cannot be explained by any law of matter, but is presupposed in all. "The *ne plus ultra* of explanation to the physicist," Dr. Lodge tells us, "is contained in the term mechanical;"* but the whole science of mechanics is based

gested that it was not an incredible hypothesis that the existence of an element unknown to the laws of matter should have to be admitted. Professor Allen, of Birmingham, remarked during the same discussion that it appeared to him that, in addition to the matters which the physicist ordinarily accepted, there must be some other principle of nature, and that was the principle which determined and maintained the relationship between matter and energy.

* "Letter to *Nature*," vol. xlviii., p. 564.

upon the conception of force, of which the same authority says on another occasion: "By what means is force exerted, and what definitely is force or stress? . . . I venture to say there is something here not provided for in the orthodox scheme of physics." *

In the domain of biology, life itself is the inexplicable element. The science which bears so proud a name is the science of the conditions and processes of life, but of that which manifests itself under those conditions and in those processes, it is unable to offer even a tentative explanation; and if this is true of the lower life of vegetable and animal, how far more strikingly true does it appear when we rise to the self-conscious life of man. Holding by the "eternal opposition between mind and matter," both are incomprehensible to us. In biology we are without so much as a working hypothesis of the nature of life; in anthro

* Address to the Mathematical and Physical Section of British Association, 1891.

pology we are thrown back upon "cosmic forces" to explain the psychical development of man,* yet are told that when that psychical development has reached a certain stage (the ethical) its salvation depends on "combating the cosmic process."† If such results as these be consequent upon regarding mind and matter as eternally opposed, it is surely time that we should endeavour to look upon them in some other light. A theory which does not even permit of a coherent statement of facts is self-condemned, and this is the case with the theory of the opposition or antithesis between mind and matter, which may be regarded as simply an erroneous manner of formulating the true fact that there exist in Nature two distinct elements, and

* See Presidential Address of Dr. Munro, F.R.S.E., to the Anthropological Section of the British Association in 1893.

† "Let us understand once for all that the ethical progress of society depends not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it,"—HUXLEY, "Evolution and Ethics," p. 34

that we cannot resolve them the one into the other, but must endeavour to ascertain the terms of their relationship. What we may conceive that relationship to be has been already briefly indicated by saying that matter is the expression or "necessary manifestation" of mind or spirit,* and is presented in some detail in Chapters II. and IV.

It has appeared to the writer, however, that a truer and more adequate conception of this subject might be attained by means of an analogy, at once close and extraordinarily suggestive—that of thought and language. The student of philosophy will here be reminded of the idealism of Berkeley, or rather of the not very accurate interpretation put upon it by later philosophers and historians, according to whom Berkeley regarded the being of matter as dependent upon its presence in thought, so that to be perceived and to be were one and the same thing. This, equally

* See p. 154.

with "Plato's plan," before referred to (see p. 151), would "banish the material world to the realms of non-existence." No such drastic measure is here suggested. Matter is a real thing, just as language is a real thing; but we could not have had language without thought, and in the same manner it is contended that we could not have had matter without spirit, or the "immanent Reason" of which it is the expression. At the same time, just as it is an inadequate representation of the relationship of thought to language to say that the former is the *cause* of the latter, so it is also inadequate to make causality the link between matter and that which reveals itself through matter. Language is the mode in which thought takes shape, its way of becoming known to itself, and therefore language is evidently dependent on thought for its existence, but their relationship is a far more intimate one than that of cause and effect. We cannot conceive ourselves

putting, with regard to thought and language, Hume's question, by what right reason can assert that there is anything in the world possessed of such a nature that, when it is posited, something quite different must also be posited. Language is not "quite different" from thought; it *is* thought, thought expressed. We cannot "account for" thought by the laws of language, simply because thought unconsciously makes those laws by way of attaining to a clearer recognition of itself. In the same way we cannot "account for" mind by the laws of matter, because those laws are in reality the principles according to which human intelligence apprehends the material universe. In them mind recognises itself in the external world.

It will be sufficient for the purpose of the present analogy if we confine ourselves to human thought and human language, without, however, by any means intending to imply thereby that there is no other kind of thought, and no other way of expressing it.

As has been already pointed out, it is immediately obvious that language could never have come into existence without thought. Noise and meaningless sounds we might have had, but "articulate sound is always an utterance, a bringing out of something that is within, a manifestation or revelation of something that wants to manifest and reveal itself."* In whatever manner language first arose, whether we regard its primitive elements as having taken their origin in imitative sounds, or in any other way, it never could have arisen at all except as an utterance of thought which was constrained to find some expression for itself. So far all will be agreed, but what is certainly less apparent on the surface, is the effect that finding articulate expression must have had on thought itself. A familiar experience may give us some insight into this. We all understand what it means to have vague and

* "The Science of Language," vol. ii., p. 44: Max Müller.

unformed notions on some subject of study or experience. "I know what I mean, but I cannot explain it," is a common expression. Those who have been at the pains to test its true significance, however, will have undoubtedly come to the conclusion that they do *not* know what they mean until they *can* explain it. When, after much labour and difficulty, perhaps, they at last manage to express in spoken or written words the thought which they "could not explain," with what vividness and reality does its meaning at once stand out and expand itself before them, so that very soon the language in which they embodied it seems poor and inadequate, and they are compelled to seek for worthier and ampler expression. In the very act of uttering itself, the thought outgrows its utterance, and labours to find another yet more true and complete.

Some such process as this assisted at the formation not of languages only, but of

language, of that articulate speech without which it may well be doubted whether human reason as we know it could ever have existed. "Without reason no speech, without speech no reason,"* says Professor Max Müller; and Professor Romanès, who by no means concurs in all the conclusions reached by Müller, and who is certainly not inclined to magnify the effect on man of any exclusively human attribute, gives it as his opinion that "it is not improbable, in the absence of articulation, the human race would not have made much psychological advance upon the anthropoid apes." †

Thought and language, then, developed together, acting and re-acting upon one another, language becoming ever more full and complex, as the thought to which it gave expression rose by its aid, and through differentiating processes, into higher and higher generalisation, till from the simple and primitive ideas of savage man,

* "The Science of Language," p. 69.

† "Mental Evolution in Man," p. 15.

which can be rendered almost as well by gesture as by words, we arrive at such abstract conceptions as are to be found in the treatises of Kant, of which Professor Romanes truly says it would be impossible to render a single page by means of wordless signs alone.*

Now the study of a language may be regarded under two aspects. We may pursue it with reference to the thought which it embodies, endeavouring to arrive at as accurate an understanding of the words used as possible, in order that we may fully enter into the meaning they are intended to convey. This may be said to be the method of the literary or classical scholar. On the other hand, we may desire to fix our minds not on any thoughts contained in the language, but on the language itself, which we may "treat as a mere corpse, not caring whether it ever had any life or meaning, but simply trying to find out what it is made of, what are the impres-

* "Mental Evolution in Man," p. 147.

sions made upon our ear, and how they can be classified." * This is the method pursued through at least half his work by the philologist, and, by its means, all the knowledge possessed of language as divorced from thought, of the resemblances, relationships, community of origin between different languages, has been acquired. Most surely then this method is not to be despised ; it may indeed, if rightly handled and applied, become one of the most powerful safeguards against " the mischief which begins when language forgets itself, and makes us mistake the word for the thing, the quality for the substance, the Nomen for the Numen." † The only precaution requisite is to remember that though we are purposely confining our attention to the " body of language " only, it nevertheless has a " soul " also, viz., the thought which it expresses, and of which our study of the body is but finally intended to give us a clearer understanding.

* " The Science of Language," vol. ii., p. 580.

† *Ibid.*

Now the method of the philologist with regard to language is the method of the scientist as such with regard to nature. His object is to investigate, to verify, to record, to classify the facts of animate and inanimate matter, "not caring whether they have any life or meaning" beyond matter. His business is with the body of nature, which he finds more convenient to "treat as a corpse," that he may analyse and dissect it at his leisure. And no fault can be found with him for so doing any more than with the philologist for treating language in a like manner, so long as this treatment is regarded as provisional and partial, the clearing out of ground preparatory to laying deeper foundations, and raising a worthier superstructure. It must be remarked, however, that in this preparatory, though most important and necessary, work, it cannot be expected that any solutions of the profounder problems presented by nature will be attained, any more than the mere

reduction of language to its elements will by itself enable the philologist to understand the abstract propositions which that language contains.* With this proviso, we have every right, both in the study of language and in the study of any branch of natural science, to "claim the liberty of treating separately what in the nature of things cannot be separated,"† only we must not expect to arrive at a true understanding of these divided elements until they are again reunited. This appears to be recognised in the study of language, analysis being only regarded as the road to a more complete and comprehensive synthesis; but in the study of nature it is

* "The outward form is the key to the inward fact which it embodies; we can get at the original force and meaning of grammatical expressions and derivative words only by interrogating the phonetic utterances by which they are expressed. The science of phonology is the entrance to the science of language, but we must not forget that it is but the outer vestibule, not the inner shrine itself."—"Introduction to the Science of Language" (Sayce), vol. i., p. 60.

† "The Science of Language," vol. ii., p. 95

too often not recognised, and therefore the two halves of that study, the spiritual and the material, are respectively taken for the whole by the students whose attention is exclusively directed to the one or the other, and both are rendered incomprehensible. No doubt the reason why the science of language does not fall a victim to this treatment, is because articulate sounds are perceived to "have no independent reality," to "exist nowhere apart from meaning," from which "it follows that this so-called body of language could never have been taken up anywhere by itself, and added to our conceptions from without."* In other words, language is so evidently embodied thought, that its absolutely separate existence is not even conceivable.

Now it must be remembered that something of this kind is allowed, nay, insisted upon, with regard to nature even by the philosophy of the unknowable, for the knowable is therein

* "The Science of Language," vol. ii., p. 74.

distinctly regarded as a method or mode of the unknowable, absolutely dependent upon it, and as having no existence apart from it. The knowable is therefore most unquestionably thought of as "an articulate utterance," only it is one whose meaning we can never attain to, one which transcends human intelligence. The existence of two elements in nature is more than admitted, for their relationship to one another is even to some extent defined. The knowable is regarded as the manifestation of the unknowable; but it is a hieroglyphic to which we can never find the key, an utterance not of something which wants to reveal but to obscure itself. If this be the case, however, the most insoluble problem of the universe is why the futility of utterance should ever have come to pass at all, and especially why there should exist intelligences which desire to interpret it. A revelation which cannot reveal is a sorry expression to adopt as our ultimate formula of the universe,

and we may well turn with relief to the more reasonable theory which regards it as the necessary manifestation of that which through it we may learn to know, so long as here also we bear in mind "the mischief that arises when language forgets itself and makes us mistake the word for the thing, the quality for the substance, the Nomen for the Numen;" for, if the universe be an "articulate utterance of something which wants to reveal itself," then that something holds to it the relationship which thought holds to language, and by the study of the expression we may come to understand something, at any rate, of what is expressed.

Before proceeding further, however, it will be well to give a moment's consideration to the question whether we have any right thus to regard matter as the manifestation of spirit, instead of resting in the agnostic formula of the manifestation of the unknowable by the knowable. Without a moment's hesitation we may

say that we have such a right, and that it lies in the existence of our own self-conscious nature. Fifty years ago, though the right was ours, we could not prove it. Before Darwin and Spencer and Huxley and Wallace, and others whose names will readily occur to the reader, had shown us, as they have now shown us, the meaning and scope of "evolution," man was held to be a thing apart from the universe; a microcosm within the macrocosm, an inhabitant, not a part of the natural order. Consequently it would not have been possible then to argue that, because man is possessed of a self-conscious spiritual life, a nature in which the principle of unity transcends every difference, even the ultimate difference of subject and object, in which knowing and known are combined, therefore that spiritual life, that principle of unity, must be implicit in the universe. There were no data to justify such a conclusion, but now we possess them in abundance, and may assert, without fear of

contradiction, that if in man "the element not to be accounted for by the laws of matter" be a spiritual element, then there must be such an element in all nature, a "something wanting to reveal itself," and struggling continually into more perfect expression.

That the self-conscious life of man is not accounted for by the laws of matter, is acknowledged by all the most thorough-going evolutionists of the day, whether agnostics or not.

"Can the oscillations of a molecule," says Herbert Spencer, "be represented in consciousness side by side with a nervous shock, and the two be recognised as one? No effort enables us to assimilate them. That a unit of feeling has nothing in common with a unit of motion becomes more than ever manifest when we bring the two into juxtaposition. . . . Here, indeed, we arrive at the barrier which needs to be perpetually pointed out, alike to those who seek materialistic explanations of mental phenomena and to those who are alarmed lest such explanations may be found. The last class prove by their fear, almost as much as the first prove by their hope, that they

believe mind may possibly be interpreted in terms of matter: whereas many, whom they vituperate as materialists, are profoundly convinced that there is not the remotest possibility of so interpreting them.”*

Dr. Tyndall has repeatedly emphasised the impossibility of attempting through physical theories any explanation of consciousness :

“Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, ‘How are

* “Principles of Psychology,” vol. i., §§ 62, 63, p. 158.

these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?' . . . In affirming that the growth of the body is mechanical, and that thought, as exercised by us, has its correlative in the physics of the brain, I think the position of the materialist is stated, so far as that position is a tenable one. . . . I do not think he is entitled to say that his molecular motions and groupings explain everything. In reality they explain nothing. The utmost he can affirm is the association of two classes of phenomena, of whose real bond of union he is in absolute ignorance." *

The words in which Professor Le Conte † expresses the same thought are no stronger,—it would be difficult to make them so,—than those just quoted from Dr. Tyndall:

"Suppose we exposed the brain of a living man in a state of intense activity. Suppose, further, that our senses were absolutely perfect, so that we could see every change, of whatever sort, taking place in the brain-substance. What would we see? Obviously nothing but molecular changes, physical and chem-

* "Fragments of Science," vol. i., pp. 86, 87.

† "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," p. 291.

ical; for to the outside observer there is absolutely nothing else there to see. But the subject sees nothing of all this. His experiences are of a different order,—yiz., consciousness, thought, emotions, etc. Viewed from the *outside*, there is, there can be, nothing but motions; viewed from the inside, nothing but thought. From the one side, only physical phenomena; from the other side, only psychical phenomena. Is it not plain that, from the very nature of the case, it must ever be so? Certain vibrations of brain-molecules, certain oxidations with the formation of carbonic acid, water, and urea on the one side; and on the other there appear sensations, consciousness, thoughts, desires, volitions. There are, as it were, two sheets of blotting-paper pasted together. The one is the brain, the other the mind. Certain ink-scratches, or blotches, *utterly meaningless* on the one, soak through and appear on the other as *intelligible writings*, but how we know not and can never hope to guess.” *

* Certainly not *to guess*; but it is hardly wise to limit in so uncompromising a manner the ultimate possibilities of research and discovery. Witness the very different anticipation to which expression has been recently given by one of our most eminent physicists: “We hope some day to know so much of these internal motions, and of these structures [of molecules], that we

Examples of this unqualified accord among authorities, not by any means in complete agreement on other points, might be multiplied almost at will ; but enough have been given to prove that such an accord exists, and that the self-conscious life of man is unquestionably regarded as an element not accounted for by the laws of matter. It is to this self-conscious life,—*i.e.*, to the consciousness of existence possessed by the thinking subject,—that the term *spiritual* is applied, and there cannot be any doubt that in man his physical or material organism expresses the life of spirit thus understood. It is in the body that the self which

may be able to discover the structure in the brain that betokens memory, and the motions underlying great thoughts, goodness, love. We may then hope to form some dim scientific judgment of the thoughts underlying creation. We may be able to tell what thoughts underlie the motions of a solar system or the development of a race.”—See *Science Progress* for March 1894 : “Physical Science and its Connections,” by G. F. Fitzgerald, F.R.S. It need hardly be pointed out that such discoveries as these, should they ever be realised, would deal a more decisive death-blow to “materialism” than even the inexplicability of consciousness by any laws of matter at present known to us.

feels, thinks, and knows, differentiates itself from the external world, and becomes conscious of its own existence and of the inadequacy of the body to explain that existence; and it is in the body accordingly that the spiritual life is manifested. But is it in the body of man alone? Not if psychical phenomena are to attest the life of spirit; for in so far as any animal, however low in the biological scale, exhibits truly psychical phenomena,—and even the protozoa appear to do so in a rudimentary manner,*—we are driven back to elementary spiritual life to account for them; consciousness, even if it be mere sentiency, is not explicable by the laws of matter.

But the question immediately presents itself, Are we to stop here? “No, for the lowest animals and lowest plants merge into each other so completely that no one can draw the line between them with certainty.” Neither can we place the boundary line

* See Romanes’ “Animal Intelligence,” chap. i.

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manifested through matter; only that descend in the scale from man to animal to plant, from plant to crystal, *where* it diminish in power, activity, and *in* serve it until when we reach the inorganic *state* of matter we find as enormous a difference *in* the spiritual life as in its material expression.

And here we are at once brought back to the analogy of thought and language. The almost immeasurable distance between the first crude articulations of primitive man, as we may suppose them to have existed, and the abstract and highly elaborated language of science and philosophy, is comparable only with that which divides the thought expressed in the one case from that expressed in the other. There is a parallel to this in the vast chain of being which separates the life of inorganic matter from the life of man. Marvellous as are the unerring molecular motions by which a crystal is built up, what are their complexity and intricacy compared to those of the molecular motions

between organic and inorganic matter; for here we still encounter force, and what is the difference between the force which acts on animate and the force which acts on inanimate matter? Though the results are so different, how are we to distinguish between that which causes the molecular groupings in a crystal, in a protoplasmic cell, and in the human brain? In each case the material changes are brought about by changes of motion; in the last case, these material changes are accompanied by thought and self-consciousness. Are we not, then, forced to infer that if in the only place where "we know what motion in itself is,—*i.e.*, in our own brains,—we *know* nothing but thought,"* then wherever motion appears, thought, the evidence of spiritual life, is implicitly present also? We therefore arrive at the conclusion that spiritual life is universal, and that to human intelligence it is universally

* Lecture on "Electro-Magnetic Radiation," at the Royal Institution, March 1891, by Professor G. F. Fitzgerald, F.R.S.

manifested through matter ; only that as we descend in the scale from man to animal, from animal to plant, from plant to crystal, we observe it diminish in power, activity, and intensity, until when we reach the inorganic stage of matter we find as enormous a difference in the spiritual life as in its material expression.

And here we are at once brought back to the analogy of thought and language. The almost immeasurable distance between the first crude articulations of primitive man, as we may suppose them to have existed, and the abstract and highly elaborated language of science and philosophy, is comparable only with that which divides the thought expressed in the one case from that expressed in the other. There is a parallel to this in the vast chain of being which separates the life of inorganic matter from the life of man. Marvellous as are the unerring molecular motions by which a crystal is built up, what are their complexity and intricacy compared to those of the molecular motions

going on from moment to moment in the brain of a thinking, willing man? And it is in proportion to the increase in complexity and intricacy of motion that the increase in fulness and intensity of life is made apparent. But neither in the case of thought and language, nor of spirit and matter, is this greater fulness and intensity attained without struggle.* Civilised language bears the marks of the various and often conflicting agencies which have

* "The number of abstracts possessed by a language is a good gauge of its development. It is difficult for us to realise the mental struggles and the ages of previous preparation required for the discovery of those ideas which now seem to us so familiar. The day on which, according to the ancient legend, Pythagoras struck out the idea of the world, and named it *κόσμος*, summed up all the labours of Eastern philosophy and Greek thought, before which the law and order of the universe at last lay revealed. It is to Anaxagoras, to Heraklitus, to Xenophanes that we owe those ideas of mind, of motion, of existence which form the groundwork of modern science. Nay, our own generation has witnessed the creation of more than one great abstract idea, henceforth to be the common property of mankind through the word by which it is expressed. To have won for the race a single idea like that of *Natural Selection* is a higher glory than the conquests of a Cæsar."—"Introduction to the Science of Language" (Sayce), p. 102.

been at work during its formation ; by slow and painful steps it has attained its comparatively advanced development ; yet, even now, how imperfect do we often feel it to be, how cumbersome, how apparently detrimental to the very thought which yet without it could not pass into the stage of conscious existence, to which the lack of the power of expression would be death ; and the development of the material universe is in like manner marked by a continual struggle. The " story of the heavens," so far as it can be read or surmised by man, and the story of the earth, are alike in this respect ; they do not,—from the human standpoint, at any rate,—exhibit a picture of calm and peaceful progress, but of development which, however entirely controlled by law, is nevertheless the outcome of what appear to be conflicting and opposing forces, or, more accurately, forces which keep one another in check, to which full play is not allowed.

And if this be apparent even in inorganic evolution, it becomes far more strikingly

evident when we pass on to organic. The struggle for life among plants and animals, and the consequent suffering to the latter, the still worse form of this same struggle in the human race, and the terrible incubus of moral evil, imply at the least (and it is not intended to deny that they imply much more,) a difficult and even agonising endeavour on the part of that "which wants to reveal itself" to attain adequate utterance. In man alone is articulation reached, and in him how imperfectly! Yet it *is* reached; the mystery of the universe has found expression at last, and just as all possibilities opened out to thought when it found its way to articulate speech, so all possibilities open out to the life of spirit which has become conscious of itself, for at the same moment it becomes also conscious of God. That there are many different stages in this consciousness, both of self and of God, that it has been, and too often is still, vague, contradictory, even unrecognisable, is but what we

must expect in the present stage of development ; for though the spiritual life has begun to find articulate expression, that expression is as yet hardly more than the imperfect speech of childhood. Even now, however, the advance made since articulation was attained may give us good ground of hope for the future. Possibilities are not actualities, but they are a necessary antecedent to actualities. Without the first crude sense of a power in and about him which yet is not his, man could have made no advance towards the faith which our age perceives, however dimly, to be the only faith adequate to its need, the faith that "in our efforts to realise the good of humanity, we are not merely straining after an ideal beyond us which may or may not be realised, but are animated by a principle which, within us and without us, is necessarily realising itself, because it is the ultimate principle by which all things are and are known."* A very different con-

* Caird, "Essays on Literature and Philosophy," p. 531.

clusion this to the one reached by an eminent expounder of agnostic thought, that, "since the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends," the "ethical progress of society consists in combating it." * Such an outlook may well strike terror into the heart of the boldest, and raise into more distinct consciousness the need of "that absolute certitude of religion that man can work effectually because all the universe is working with him, or, in other words, because God is working in him," † which, since it is the indication of a capacity, ‡ is the prophecy of its own fulfilment.

Yet, if this be so; if the "principle which within us and without us is necessarily realising itself," be Divine, what does the contradiction of evil mean? Supposing even,—and this is a large supposition, too large to be conceded,—that it could be adequately accounted for by

* Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics," p. 34.

† "Essays on Literature and Philosophy," Caird, p. 531.

‡ See Chapter III.

that struggle for expression which has been compared to the struggle of thought for utterance, why should such a struggle be? That the whole of Nature points to its existence, that man emphasises and witnesses to its reality throughout his entire history, individual and collective, these are facts which none can gainsay; and they are facts which no one who attempts to investigate the relationship between man and that Power by which he came into being can venture to ignore. The considerations brought forward in the present essay, are, as the writer firmly believes, capable of throwing light not to be despised on these awful and momentous questions; but for the moment they must be left on one side. They are not included in that aspect of the analogy between thought and language and spirit and matter which has formed the subject of this essay. All that has been now advanced is that just as thought is essentially self-manifesting, so the life of spirit is essentially self-manifesting; and that as lan-

guage is the utterance of the one, so matter is the utterance of the other. And from this standpoint, even while recognising the deep and far-reaching significance of that tremendous problem which has yet to be faced, there is hope,—almost boundless hope,—in the vista opened before us.

“Words, we are told, are the fortresses of thought. They enable us to make every intellectual conquest the basis of operations for others still beyond. Moreover, thought and language act and react upon one another; so that . . . the growth of thought and language is coral-like. Each shell is the product of life, but becomes in turn the support of new life. In the same manner, each word is the product of thought, but becomes in turn a new support for the growth of thought.” *

Applying these metaphors to the relationship between spirit and matter, may we not say, as we survey the rise in the scale of being through inorganic to organic, and finally to superorganic

* Romanes, “Mental Evolution in Man.”

life : Material forms are the fortresses of spirit, whose every conquest is thus made the basis of operations for others still beyond ; and again, each material form is the product of spirit, but becomes in turn a new support for spiritual growth?

CHAPTER VI.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

IN the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to illustrate and elucidate the relationship of spirit to matter, by drawing a parallel with that of thought to language ; and having followed out the analogy in some detail, and having given what seemed a weighty and sufficient reason for regarding the life which is manifested in nature as spiritual, and not merely a "mode of the Unknowable," we left the subject at the moment of coming face to face with the awful and all-important question : If the "principle which within us and without us is necessarily manifesting itself" be divine, what does the contradiction of evil mean ? Supposing even (and, as was then said, this is

a large supposition,—too large to be admitted,) that it could adequately be accounted for by that struggle for expression which was compared to the struggle of thought for utterance, *still, why should such a struggle be?* There cannot be a doubt that this problem weighs heavily on the hearts and minds of the present generation, more heavily perhaps than in the case of any that have preceded it, though in all ages there have been those whom the contemplation of it has driven to the bitter conclusion: "Either God is not all good, or He is not all wise, or He is not all powerful, or there is no God at all."

This last is the form of negation to which preference seems to be given in our own day, and the writer has no hesitation in agreeing that, if it be accepted, any attempt towards forwarding a solution of the problem of evil must be hopeless. It is equally hopeless, however, if we exclude from consideration the data with which science now so abundantly provides us

regarding the development of the "material" universe, and more especially of its organic division. Accepting the facts of science, and of the Christian revelation, modern discoveries may do much towards convincing us that we are not forced to make a choice between the four alternatives named above, but that even though Reason cannot yet do more than try her wings in a region which so far transcends that of her ordinary flights, she may yet perceive that the goal towards which she is struggling is identical with the starting-point of faith ; that not *despite* but *because of* the existence, the all-goodness, the all-power, and the all-wisdom of God, the problem of evil has been formulated and will be solved.

The great advantage which science affords to those who attempt, either from the side of philosophy or religion, to approach the deeper questions of existence, is in supplying correct and carefully verified facts by which theory may be tested, and this is an advantage peculiar

to modern times. The ancient philosophers were compelled to construct a universe *a priori*, evolving its laws from their own minds; and the marvellous insight which they showed, and the remarkable manner in which their conjectures sometimes closely approximated to later discovered truth, gives proof of the very real correspondence between the intelligible world and the intelligence that desires to apprehend it. But these great thinkers had no objective data upon which to go; their reasoning was purely deductive and continually open to the objection of Kant: "It is indeed a very common fate of human reason first of all to finish its speculative edifice as soon as possible, and then only to inquire whether the foundation be sure,"* to build, in fact, a veritable castle in the air, instead of a solid brick-and-stone edifice. In our own age we are confronted by a different danger; it is not from a dearth of facts we suffer, but from unwilling-

* "Critique of Pure Reason," Introduction.

ness or incapacity to use the facts we have. Metaphysic has fallen into such disrepute (though signs of a reaction are not wanting,) that it is almost taken for granted a metaphysician must be one "who speculates without data," a proceeding which the nineteenth century rightly looks upon with supreme contempt. But with the data which are now forthcoming, no philosopher need be at a loss for solid material; and some have already shown that they are abundantly willing to accept the inductive basis which science provides, and to prove their appreciation of it by endeavouring to raise a superstructure worthy of the foundation, one in which a wider, clearer view shall be obtained from the upper stories than from the basement, a result which Science herself should be the first to recognise and appreciate.

The great fundamental cosmic process with which we are brought face to face in every branch of natural science is evolution ;

and evolution points pre-eminently to a self-determining principle in nature. It is this, no doubt, more than its supposed incompatibility with the Scriptural account of the origin of the universe and of man, which has caused so much unfounded alarm among religious persons. "Now, origins as well as causes are reduced to resident forces and natural law; now, nature is sufficient of itself, not only for sustentation but for creation. Thus science has seemed to push God farther and farther away from us, until now, if this view be true, evolution finishes the matter by pushing Him quite out of the universe and dispensing with Him altogether."* But this, as the same writer subsequently points out, is a very superficial way of regarding the matter, and as misleading as superficial conclusions usually are. What the knowledge of this principle of evolution has really done for us is to give an intellectual insight, hitherto

* Professor Le Conte, "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," p. 281.

unattainable, into the relationship between God and nature, and this is a gift not to be despised ; for the intellectual are no less intrinsically human than the moral qualities, and it is the whole man which needs to know God and to be known of Him, though the intuitive perception by the religious consciousness of a great truth may precede,—in this very instance has preceded,—by long ages its verification by the reason. The apostles and early Christian fathers, owing to their firm grasp on the truth of the Incarnation, clearly saw the double aspect of the divine relationship to nature theologically expressed as the immanence and transcendence of God. “In Him we live and move and have our being.” “In Him all things hold together.” Yet, at the same time, “He is before all things,” “God over all, blessed for ever.”

And here we may remark that the teaching of the New Testament is rather to see nature in God than God in nature. All things, we

are given to understand, are in God; but not until self-consciousness is attained, not till there is light as well as life, is He known to be also in them,—known, that is, to be not only sustaining His creation in existence, but to have communicated to it His own life. Nature in God, and God in man,—this would seem to be the order of the Christian revelation, and it is the truth of the communicated life which the great facts of evolution at once vindicate and uphold, because they teach us to regard the universe as a mighty organism, in every part of which the life of the whole is present. This is the true meaning of an organism, “a unity of organisms, organic in all its parts, animated by a life which, though embraced in a wide circle, is still centred in itself.”* None can deny that this is the kind of life which modern science teaches us to see in nature. “For myself,” says Professor Huxley, “I am bound to say that the term

* “Hegel,” by Professor E. Caird, p. 179.

'Nature' covers the totality of that which is. The world of psychical phenomena appears to me to be as much a part of nature as the world of physical phenomena; and I am unable to perceive any justification for cutting the world into two halves, one natural and one supernatural."* And again, Professor Le Conte:

"What is spirit? We know things only by their phenomena; what are the phenomena of spirit? Consciousness, will, intelligence, memory, love, hate, fear, desire—surely these are some of them. But has not a dog or a monkey all these? Pressed with this difficulty, some have indeed felt compelled to accord immortal spirit to higher animals. But we cannot stop here. If to these, then also to all animals, for we have here only a sliding-scale without break. Can we stop now and make it co-extensive with sentience? No; for the lowest animals and lowest plants merge into one another so completely that no one can draw the line between them with certainty. We must extend it to plants also. Shall we stop here and make immortal spirit co-extensive with life? We cannot,

* "Essays on Controverted Questions," p. 35, note.

for life-force is certainly correlated with, transmutable into, derivable from physical and chemical forces. We must extend it into dead nature also. Therefore everything is immortal or none." *

Thus inorganic, organic, and super-organic phenomena are all manifestations of a single developing life, whether we choose to call that life natural or spiritual. But, as has been pointed out in previous essays, if this be the case, the only standpoint from which we can get anything like a satisfactory and comprehensive survey of this life is the highest known manifestation of it, and that is man. Anthropomorphism becomes a necessity forced upon us by science herself. We had no right, while the "material" universe and man were considered as two separate entities, to interpret the one by the other. Now we are compelled to do so, or

* "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," p. 293. Such immortality, however, is not, as Professor Le Conte subsequently points out, human immortality. This, as has been shown in a previous chapter, p. 75, is *persistence of personality*, and personality cannot persist until it has been attained.

to leave any attempt at interpretation alone, and this the mind of man cannot consent to. "In that which is in any sense self-determined, the intelligence recognises its counterpart,"* and, so recognising, feels that it carries within itself the key to all the problems with which it is vexed, nor will it rest until they are solved.

Hitherto, however, the modern tendency, despite the teaching of evolution, has been towards a solution which endeavours to explain away self-determination, and to place all nature—man, of course, included—under necessity. We are so accustomed "to regard objects as determined, not by themselves, but by other objects, that to modern science this mode of viewing them seems the only natural one, and instead of finding its own freedom in the world, the mind rather begins to consider itself, like all other objects, as subjected to the law of external necessity."* But such reasoning is based upon a total misapprehension of what

* "Hegel," by Prof. E. Caird, p. 191.

evolution involves—viz., a *union* of freedom and necessity. In it these are opposed only as two sides of one truth are opposed. The truth is self-determination, the opposite sides are freedom and necessity. That which is determined must be determined according to some law; that which is externally determined according to an external law, then we have necessity only; that which is internally or self-determined according to an internal law, then we have freedom and necessity both—a law of liberty. A theory of the universe as subject to external necessity regards it as a manufacture; a theory of the universe as subject to internal necessity regards it as an organism, *free to develop*. That is what freedom means, not an exhibition of irresponsible caprice, but a manifestation of law, inexorable because it is not imposed upon the life from without, but is developed from within as the expression of that life's essential nature. Regarding the universe in this way,—and it is the only

way in which we can regard it if it is an organic whole,—we are compelled to allow that there is a “certain independence” in its life. It has not been made; it has been made to make itself, and the outcome of this process, the epitome in which we are to study it, is man, man in whom lies the knowledge of good and evil.

A very high scientific authority,*—one, too, to whom the spread of popular knowledge on the subject of organic evolution is largely due,—has recently laid down the from him somewhat astounding proposition, that at a certain stage of development, viz., the ethical, man and the universe part company, that “the cosmos has no sort of relation to moral ends,” and that man’s future progress depends on the courage and capacity with which he combats the cosmic process. He further says that “if the cosmos is the effect of an immanent,

* Professor Huxley in his Romanes Lecture, “Evolution and Ethics,” 1893.

omnipotent, and infinitely beneficent cause, the existence in it of real evil, still less of necessarily inherent evil, is plainly inadmissible." *

With regard to the "necessarily inherent evil," we may at once concede the point. With regard to real evil, that is only rendered inadmissible if we regard nature as the "totality of that which is," thus making God and nature convertible terms ; but scientific considerations lead to no such solution of the problem. The facts of evolution, as science knows them, are, superficially, equally compatible with the Spinozean doctrine which, in calling nature "the totality of that which is," Professor Huxley appears inclined to adopt, and with the Christian faith ; but if the latter is able to supply a clue to the meaning of those facts, and the former is not, it is to the Christian faith that intellectual adherence must be given, and that on pre-

* Professor Huxley in his Romanes Lecture, "Evolution and Ethics," 1893.

cisely the same grounds that adherence is given to the undulatory instead of to the emissive theory of light, or to the origin of species through the operation of natural causes, instead of by special creation. It is possible that there may be some,—perhaps even many,—educated persons who would say that they did not know in the former of these two cases which theory to regard as true; a few might even assert that the knowledge was unattainable. Such agnostics would not be regarded as very reliable guides by physicists; and agnostics in religious matters who take for granted that the unknown to them is to all the unknowable, because they will not be at the pains to make the necessary investigations themselves, and are unable or unwilling to give credence to those who do, place themselves on the same level with the agnostics in scientific matters who do not know for the simple reason that they do not care to know.

The problem of evil cannot perhaps be better presented from the non-christian point of view than in the following words of Professor Huxley :—

“The propounders of what are called the ‘ethics of evolution,’ when the ‘evolution of ethics’ would usually better express the object of their speculations, adduce a number of more or less interesting facts, and more or less sound arguments, in favour of the origin of the moral sentiments, in the same way as other natural phenomena, by a process of evolution. I have little doubt, for my own part, that they are on the right track ; but as the immoral sentiments have no less been evolved, there is, so far, as much natural sanction for the one as for the other. The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist. Cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about ; but in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before.” *

It is just where “cosmic evolution” shows

* “Evolution and Ethics,” p. 31.

itself to be incompetent that the Christian religion steps forward and declares its competency. Let us then see whether it is indeed equal to the formidable task it has undertaken. In the first place, a few preliminary statements must be made.

1. The position laid down by Professor Huxley, that the "cosmic process" has no sort of relation to moral ends, cannot be accepted. The moral qualities are an outcome of the "cosmic process;" the fact that, however devoid of "reason" it may be, we have an unconquerable conviction that "what we call good *is* preferable to what we call evil," would seem to indicate that the "thief and the murderer" do *not* "follow nature just as much as the philanthropist." * More-

* Self-preservation compels even thieves and murderers to behave unselfishly towards one another. "Honour among thieves" has become a proverbial expression. We do not sufficiently reflect, however, that such honour is forced upon them by the exigencies of the case, just as the repression of evil-doers is forced upon society at large. The two facts, that

over, the "cosmic process," of which super-organic evolution is necessarily a part, tends finally to eliminate the evil. Whether conscious or unconscious, this is certainly "a moral end."*

moral and altruistic conduct is indispensable to the subsistence and progress of social life, and that man is "a social animal," sufficiently indicate that the philanthropist is a more "natural" product than the thief and the murderer.

* In Note 19 in the Appendix to his Romanes Lecture, Professor Huxley seems himself to feel the need of some qualification to the very unqualified statements quoted above. He there says: "Of course, strictly speaking, social life and the ethical process, in virtue of which it advances towards perfection, are part and parcel of the general process of evolution, just as the gregarious habit of innumerable plants and animals, which has been of immense advantage to them, is so. . . . Among birds and mammals societies are formed of which the bond seems in many cases to be purely psychological—*i.e.*, it appears to depend upon the liking of the individuals for one another's company. The tendency of individuals to over self-assertion is kept down by fighting. Even in these rudimentary forms of society love and fear come into play, and enforce a greater or less renunciation of self-will. To this extent the general cosmic process begins to be checked by a rudimentary ethical process, which is, strictly speaking, part of the former, just as the 'governor' in a steam engine is part of the mechanism of the engine." This qualification is so thoroughgoing that it amounts to a contradiction.

2. A provisional definition must be given of the meaning of "good" and "evil." For this we may turn to Mr. Spencer: "Under all circumstances we call that good which is fitted to the purpose for which it was intended; we call that perfect which is perfectly so fitted."* Evil, of course, is the converse of this.

3. We must be allowed to assume the truth of the Christian Revelation for the purpose of testing its competency to deal with the problem of evil. This is only following scientific precedent. To quote one instance out of many, the theory of "caloric" was not rejected until the appeal to experiment decided against it. It was not rejected first and the experiments made afterwards.

4. Since ethical man is the outcome of the cosmic process, and since he is its highest outcome, we shall find the problem of evil most distinctly stated in him. Consequently,

* "Data of Ethics," § 8, p. 21.

we shall study it in him, and in him endeavour to read its meaning for that which is below him.

According to the definition given above—(2), What is man's "good"?—The Christian Revelation supplies no uncertain answer to this question. Human nature has received the stamp of sonship to God; for human life to be "good," therefore, it must be fitted to enter into conscious union with the Divine Life; to attain perfection that union must embrace the whole nature of man. His environment is God, and at all points he must respond to that environment, or his life is less good than it is capable of being. Conscious union with the Divine is the "purpose for which" man "was intended"; it is consequently the supreme need of his nature. The practical recognition of this fact makes the Bible the Book of Books, and Christianity the Faith of Faiths. To become one with God, not by submergence in the

infinite gulf of the Divine Being, but by conscious uninterrupted communion with the Divine Self,—this is the goal of man as represented in Christianity, the end for which he came into existence; and this is his good.

Such a conception of good leads to a corresponding conception of evil. It is that which unfits man to respond to the Divine Environment, to lead a life of conscious sonship to the Divine Father. *It is separation from God.* And the separation of man from God involves separation from his fellows, for it means that he has become self-centred instead of God-centred; confined within the narrow compass of his own individuality he is unable to receive, unable to contribute his share of the common life. Such isolation is death wherever it occurs, for it is not from man only that the debt to the environment is due, but from every individualised existence which has drawn from the

common store the material which it has annexed and transmuted into new powers of organic development.

Every natural process impresses this fact upon us. The rivers whose waters were originally drawn from the ocean ultimately return to it again, not as formless vapour, but as separate and mighty streams, each having contributed to the wealth and fertility of the countries through which it has flowed. The plants which obtain from soil and air the materials for their self-development, and store the solar energy to which they owe their existence, give it forth again ages afterwards as light and heat for man, or in dying minister to the animal life which without them could not be. Animals whose higher vitality makes a proportionately larger demand upon the environment, unconsciously modify and enrich the surroundings which are the conditions of their existence, so that throughout the whole range of nature we find a union of giving and receiving, which presents the law of sacrifice

under the aspect of restitution. Nor is it otherwise when we reach the human stage. Man, who has received the supreme gift of self-conscious life, is least of all able to sustain and develop that life in isolation. In order to his self-realisation, he makes imperious demands upon the external world; all that is must contribute to form the raw material transmuted by his self-conscious perception into the experience which feeds his sensuous, intellectual, and ethical life. He levies almost boundless contributions, and contracts equally boundless obligations, most of all towards his fellows. To them he consciously turns for help, for sympathy, for affection, for the satisfaction and exercise of all that part of his nature which marks him out as man, and to those on whom he is thus dependent he owes an equal service. In order either to realise himself, or to contribute to the self-realisation of others, however, he must be open on all sides to the Divine life which is the parent of

his own. The self which he has received from it he must render to it again, not through annihilation of everything that makes it a self, but by laying it with all its conscious powers on the altar of voluntary service. Thus the interunion of giving exhibited throughout the cosmos reaches in man the height of willing sacrifice and mutual intelligent love. This is the law of his life, and to disobey it is, in so far as the disobedience goes, to perish to God and man alike.

We must next remark that the knowledge of good and evil is divinely claimed. Whatever interpretation we may put upon the opening chapters of Genesis, however freely we may concede that in scientific insight they do not go beyond the time in which they were written, still as Christians we believe, and we must bear in mind, that they were intended by the all-wise Father to convey to His human children real and eternal spiritual truths. The existence of evil was to press, and

has pressed, throughout the whole era of human life on earth, as a sore and heavy burden; it was to be a problem whose apparent hopelessness would drive many of the noblest hearts and intellects to despair. Such being the case, we should expect to find in the treatment of evil in the inspired records some clear and unmistakable guidance as to the way in which this dread, this tremendous problem was to be regarded and stated, and this in the very first pages of the Bible we do find: "Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil."*

Whatever these words may mean, and their deep import can hardly fail to strike any serious student of Scripture, they must at least

* It is of course not intended, as the context abundantly shows, to rest the whole weight of proof of the Divine knowledge of good and evil on this solitary passage. Such proof is found in all revelation, giving to the latter word its widest signification. It is the early indication of the way in which the problem of evil is to be treated that gives its importance to the text cited.

mean this, that by the knowledge of good and evil,—*i.e.*, by the possibility of moral choice,—man is not separated from God; nay, as these words imply, and as the whole teaching of the Bible, and specially of the New Testament, makes us dare to hope and to believe, by this knowledge a closer union between the Divine and the human is rendered possible. The manner of the Divine knowledge we cannot venture to conjecture. The attainment of the human knowledge has been through what we regard as the sole road to knowledge for man, *experience*.* In other words, man has learned what evil—*i.e.*, separation from God—means, by undergoing that separation. The necessity for the *knowledge* seems at any rate not altogether beyond our

* Experience is not here used in its narrower sense of the communication through known physical channels between the ego and the non-ego, but in its wider sense as coincident with human life, and therefore as including far more than correspondence with what is generally understood by the natural environment.

comprehension, and to it we will presently return; the necessity for the possibility of attaining it through *experience* is obvious, for without such a possibility there could have been no choice. The fact that the ideal Man, "tempted in all points like as we are," had no such experience, and yet had the knowledge of good and evil, shows that the race of which He is the perfect type would also have been exempt from it, had there not been a failure of the will. Yet, as has been already indicated in a previous chapter, it is erroneous (and unscriptural) to designate by the name of *fall* that which is a distinct advance in knowledge. To know good and evil, even if it be known partly through experience of evil, marks a higher plane of being than to be incapable of knowing it.

The point of practical importance, however, is to notice that this conception of evil as separation from God is incompatible with re-

garding it as a lower form of good. Even partial want of correspondence with the environment can never be otherwise than inimical to life. In so far as it exists there is death and not life ; were it complete, death would have conquered life. It never has been complete in the case of man ; he has been always more or less conscious of his deficiency, always striving, however blindly and imperfectly, to remedy it, "seeking after God if haply he might find Him." That such a separation should have been possible at all is due to "the certain independence of life," pointed to, as we have already observed, by the principle of evolution. The relationship of man to God is expressed as sonship ; the whole course of evolution has tended to the actualisation of this sonship, making that which was in the beginning a mere "promise and potency" an accomplished fact. If man is a son, the whole universe partakes in his sonship. Now the life of a son, though impossible

without the life of the Father, is yet not synonymous with it. So much the human relationship may teach us ; and since it has been chosen to express the divine, our wisdom is to accept the light thus unmistakably given. The life which is in man—and in the universe—is of divine origin because communicated by God ; it is free or self-determining (consequently not under compulsion by God,) because it is *derived*, not *shared*, and in this power of self-determination the possibility of evil—*i.e.*, of separation—lies. The son can rebel against his father because he is a son and not an instrument or member, a mere temporary and partial manifestation of “the totality of that which is.”

It may be added also that the possibility of separation from God depends on His Personal Being. If we are to regard the Divine Principle as “the restless fiery energy operating according to law, out of which all things emerge and into which they return

in the endless successive cycles of the great year; which creates and destroys worlds as a wanton child builds up and anon levels sand-castles on the sea-shore,"* we cannot of course conceive of separation from it, for it is not only *in* all things, it *is* all things. Personal beings can be separated, can hate instead of loving one another even though they share a common life, because in each one that life is individualised, in each the self-determining principle exists, and differentiates itself from itself as manifested in other individuals and in the whole. It is thus that human beings are distinct and yet share in a common nature.

When we regard their relationship to God instead of to one another, we may still,—following the Christian revelation,—to some extent apply the same reasoning, because of the Fatherhood which is the substance of that revelation, the true community of nature which

* " Evolution and Ethics," p. 23.

the Incarnation implies.* If we could shake ourselves free from preconceived notions of what ought to be, and listen to the divine teaching as to what is, accepting the simple and obvious meaning of these names "Father" and "son," they would be a revelation in themselves by which even the darkest problems would be seen capable of solution, however partially that solution can as yet be worked out. And if they seem to confer upon man too high a dignity, or, to our limited apprehension, derogate too much from the Supreme Majesty of God, we must remember that He Himself selected these names to express the relationship between man and Himself, and that they must therefore more accurately represent its true nature than any terms we can invent.

It may appear at first that thus throwing the possibility, and consequently the ultimate

* Since, then, the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same.—HEBREWS ii. 14 (R.V.).

reason of evil, upon the fact of man's sonship to God, makes the problem even more terrible than before. The whole teaching of Revelation, the whole inward consciousness of ethical man, make manifest the truth that evil is utterly antagonistic to the Divine Nature, is hateful to and abhorred by Him, in Whom is no darkness of separation, but the clear and unsullied light of perfect unity and union. Why then should sonship entail that which threatens to obscure—nay, destroy it? In other words, why should God have permitted separation from Himself in a universe which derives its life from His,—in a being the end of whose existence is full and conscious union with the Father of his spirit? There can be but one answer to this question. The separation was allowed in order that the realisation of the Divine Life in the universe might be complete, that the union of man with God might be perfect, the result of intelligent love, aspiration, and obedience, not of inability to

choose. The knowledge of good and evil, we have said, is a divine knowledge. We assert this every time that we assert the holiness of God, for holiness is not compatible with ignorance of evil; the latter state is one of innocence, beautiful, indeed, but with a purity which appeals to us by its weakness, not by its strength; whose safety lies in being unaware of, not in overcoming evil. For man to be united to God, it is not sufficient that he should be innocent, he must be holy; hence the possibility of the experience of evil, and his education by means of it. And if the question be still pressed, Why could no other education have sufficed? it must be answered, No other could have attained the same end.

“ The possible only is possible of accomplishment even to the Almighty. And one of the impossibilities is having made man free [*i.e.*, self-determining] to compel him to act as if he were necessitated [*i.e.*, under external law]. To suspend the will when it inclined to sin, were to prevent sin by the destruction

of freedom. And sin were in that case not prevented, for the will that had meant to do evil [*i.e.*, to separate itself from the will of God, 'to substitute self for God as the law and end of being,'] were an evil will, and could never be restored to being without being restored to evil. Evil once intended may be vanquished by being allowed; but were it hindered by an act of annihilation, then the victory would rest with the evil which had compelled the Creator to retrace His steps. And, to carry the prevention backward another stage, if the possibility of evil had hindered the creative action of God, then He would have been as it were overcome by its very shadow. Into this discussion, then, omnipotence cannot enter. . . . But if 'permit' in its physical sense is irrelevant, in its ethical it has here no place. God did not 'permit' sin to be [save by creating a being capable of sinning, and only thus could He create a being capable of obeying]; it is in its essence the transgression of His law, and so His only attitude to it is one of opposition." *

But of what law is it the transgression? Of nothing less than the law of God's own Being, of that perfection of moral nature which He

* "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," Fairbairn, p. 456.

reveals to us as His. We forget often that law is the expression as well as the rule of the life which is conformed to it. God is not *under* law, but His whole universe tells us that law is divine, pertaining, that is, to His Nature, a condition of His existence. Man, in so far as he separates himself from God, is lawless, and so at variance with "the principle which within him and without him is necessarily realising itself." Yet it is by this principle he lives, so that, in opposing himself to God, he opposes himself to himself.* But that which enables man to oppose himself to God, is the personal—*i.e.*, the self-determining life which is his, and which is what it has been agreed to call spiritual. The often-insisted-

* "I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?"—ROM. vii. 21 (R.V.).

upon opposition between spirit and matter, to which some have referred the existence of evil, is therefore seen to be resolved into an opposition of spirit to itself. This may appear clearer by referring to the analogy of thought and language. Thought cannot be opposed to, though it may be inadequately rendered by, the language which is its expression; but thought can be in contradiction with, or opposed to itself. This is entirely conceivable—nay, it is a matter of experience. In like manner spirit cannot be opposed to though it may be imperfectly expressed by matter which is its manifestation; but it can, because of the variety of manifestation entailed by the personal element, be opposed to itself. In the fact that the opposition is to itself, however, lies the hope—nay, the assurance—of ultimate reconciliation and unity. “No absolute defeat of the spirit,—no defeat that does not contain the elements of a greater triumph,—can possibly take place in a world which is itself nothing

but the realisation of spirit." * Nor must we, in thus recognising the fact of the opposition of spirit to itself, fall into the error of supposing that the Divine Nature is opposed to itself. The life of the universe is *derived from*, not *shared with*, God. God is not nature, but the Source of nature; He is not mankind, but the Father of mankind, so that men have the distinctiveness, the individuality, the freedom of sons.

Though the subject so far transcends the limits within which it must be here confined, the Christian revelation has nevertheless been shown competent to do that which "cosmic evolution" of itself cannot do—viz., "furnish a reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil," and that without denying the reality testified to by "the universal experience of mankind" of "pain and sorrow and wrong;" for if man's "good" be union with God, and if for its realisation man must be

* "Hegel," Professor E. Caird, p. 141.

holy because God is holy, then the "moral sentiments" have produced credentials which the immoral never can, and the separation from God of which the latter are a sign, is seen to be theoretically as well as practically the source of all that we call "evil."

There remains, however, the supreme form of the question, asked sometimes in assumed indifference, often in the agony of despair: Is life under such conditions worth having? Will the issue justify the long travail-pangs which are its antecedent? Since "the immense multitude of sentient beings which [it is said] cannot profit by man's discipline" suffer with him, since to man himself the partial and temporary separation from God is fraught with anguish so intense, can any subsequent bliss be a sufficient compensation, not to some individuals only, but to the whole race, the whole universe, or would it for man and nature alike have been better not to be?

It is hardly now,—in the present stage of

transition and imperfection,—when the outlook is still so dim and the pain so keen, that this question can be adequately answered. There are some,—thank God there are many,—who in the midst of the conflict are so assured of the certainty and the worth of victory, that they can unhesitatingly reply in the affirmative. All Christians who are true to their faith are among these. Others, again, are driven to despair and defiance by what appear the hideous ironies and relentless cruelties of uncontrollable conditions. To all such it may be said: We cannot judge of the goal till the goal is reached. “We must not think of Creation as completed; it is only in process,” and part of the process is the experience of evil; not because God created evil,—He could not create separation from Himself,—but because the ideal of His universe is sonship, and because the perfect union of sonship could not have been attained without the freedom to choose between that and separation.

And what applies to man, applies in lower measure to lower nature. His hope is its hope, for their lot is cast in together and they cannot be divided. In the meanwhile during the time of discipline and education, the very depth of the anguish which separation from God entails, is some measure of the joy which full and perfect union with Him must mean. The capacity for happiness is gauged to a great extent by the capacity for pain, and this being so, the one unanswerable reason for boundless hope may well lie in what seems at first sight unfathomable despair.

In immediate connexion with the aspect of this great question which has last been touched on, arises that known by the name of "universal restoration," from our standpoint more appropriately thought of as *universal attainment*. Will the full and complete union with God, which is man's good, be realised in each individual of the race, or will it only be fulfilled in the race as a whole, and will there

remain individuals who, by persistent abuse of the freedom whose culmination should have been that highest union, are self-condemned to the eternal agony of separation?

Attention has already been called to the fact that if we are to regard the human race as an organic whole, of which individual human beings are the separate organs, then their persistence in life is necessitated in order that the whole may suffer no loss.* With but slight alteration the same argument applies to the present consideration. Failure of attainment on the part of any individual to his "good" is a loss not only to the individual, but to the race. Yet the difficulty arises that the perfect union with the divine which constitutes this good can only be the result of intelligent love, aspiration, and obedience,—of free and conscious self-surrender, in fact. For this reason it has seemed to many deep thinkers, among others to Frederick Denison Maurice, that

* Pages 75 and 145.

to look upon universal attainment as a certainty is impossible, because self-surrender cannot be *forced*. Were God to compel the surrender of man's will, that will would have ceased to be free, and, therefore, it would seem we have no alternative but to regard persistence in evil,—*i.e.*, in separation from God,—as a possibility. The only adequate answer to this difficulty would appear to lie in the following consideration. The life of man—as of the universe—is in its origin divine. That very principle of self-determination, through which the possibility of evil has arisen, is a proof of it. But if the origin be divine the goal must also be divine; we come from God, and we return to God, not by external compulsion, but by necessity of nature, that internal necessity in whose operation freedom is an element. Therefore, however long in individual cases the separation may last, however terrible the experience of that separation may be, ultimately it must be perceived as

that which it is, the source of all suffering, darkness, and confusion ; and once so perceived, the will without compulsion turns towards the sole remedy, self-surrender and union.

That such a conclusion is at variance with popular theology need not deter us from accepting it. There is much in popular theology entirely alien to the Christian Faith, not least that deification of evil which, however decently veiled and draped, would nevertheless divide the universe between it and God. Such a division cannot really be, and however dim and distant may appear that "divine event towards which the whole Creation moves," Christians at least can have no doubt as to what it is—the attainment of the divine ideal, "when God shall be all and in all," and the last and most erring of His sons enter into that voluntary union which is the one and perfect good.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIVINE SACRIFICE.

THROUGHOUT the present volume we have been attempting to state in present-day terms, and to regard in the light of present-day knowledge, some of the deepest and most far-reaching problems of man and of the universe. In this concluding chapter, there remains for us to face an unspeakably solemn and significant fact which has been shaping itself before us with growing clearness at each step of our advance. This fact is that any radical solution of the deep mysteries which we have been contemplating, any solution going beyond a mere restatement of the difficulties, lies neither in man nor in the universe, but in the character of the Supreme

Being,—in the Divine Nature itself. We have endeavoured to show that the interpretation of the universe to man is man. We have seen moreover that we cannot stop here, that man also needs interpreting ; and clearly whatever interprets him is the only ultimate interpretation of the order to which he belongs. Now we must add that such an ultimate interpretation is to be found, and only to be found, in God.

We thus separate ourselves at once, and in the most sharply defined manner, from the conclusions of agnosticism, if indeed those can be called conclusions which simply bid us rest in hopeless and unalterable ignorance ; which refer the whole natural order, ourselves of course included, not merely to an unknown, but an unknowable Cause. Ignorance, however, is not a state in which man voluntarily acquiesces. The most thoroughgoing agnostic would unhesitatingly avow that he is not such by choice, but by compulsion. If he could know, he

would like to know, but believing knowledge to be impossible, he submits to an enforced ignorance.

One object of the preceding chapters has been to give some evidence that this attitude of mind is neither necessary nor rational; that man can know, has an inherent capacity for knowing, not the surface of nature merely, but the core and heart of nature, because he can know God. Yet this knowledge, as has been fully confessed, has well-defined limitations, and when we venture to assert that the explanation of all the contradictions that harass us, the resolution of all the problems that vex us, the reconciliation of all the anomalies that, within and without, threaten to overwhelm us, lie in the character of God, the question arises: Are we not now going beyond our province? In this region is it possible, we do not say to know all, but to know anything? The answer is contained in the words which have been purposely chosen

to define the field of this supreme knowledge, *The character of God*; for character means those distinguishing traits by which a *Person* impresses himself upon our cognition; and to those who regard the revelation of the Divine to the human as the unveiling of a Personal Being to personal beings, the very fact that we can speak of the character of God, implies that we have to some extent the capacity for understanding it. It must be again repeated that limitation of this understanding is not denied; on the contrary, it is desired to insist on it to the utmost. We cannot fathom the personality of our nearest and dearest, nay we cannot even fathom our own; much less then can we fathom His Who is its source. Yet, apart from metaphysical quibbles, and in spite of evident limits, we are constrained to confess that, to a certain extent, we know both ourselves and our fellow-men. If we know God in the same sense, this constitutes a real though not a perfect knowledge; and

since to know a fellow-man implies that we have entered somewhat into his character, so to know God is not compatible with complete ignorance of His.

It has been previously pointed out * that "to know a person involves some action on his part as well as on ours," a breaking down of those barriers of individual exclusiveness which we are but too apt to regard as a necessary defence to the sacredness of personality. In the case where the person to be known is the superior of the one whom he desires to understand him, (as when a grown man takes pains to be understood by a child,) this breaking down of barriers involves a considerable limitation of himself. Were he to show all that is in him, he would merely cause hopeless bewilderment. He must for the time circumscribe his powers, veil his knowledge, use language suited, not to his own capacity, but to the humbler capacity which he has to

* Chapter III.

meet ; in fact, as we say, " put himself in the place " of his inferior. Unless he can do this, he can neither know nor be known by the latter ; if he can do it, we acknowledge that in the self-limitation which it has implied he has given evidence of a power enhancing the value of all others which he may possess, that of raising one beneath him towards his own high level.

A revelation of God to man must necessarily be the transcendent example of a self-limitation of which we have a familiar illustration in every parent and teacher who is worthy of the name. Christians do not need to be reminded in whom that revelation is centred, even in Him who, though the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person, yet humbled Himself and became obedient to death. In Christ we see God putting Himself in the place of His creatures, entering into the conditions which so perplex them, submitting to the limitations that

so harass them, and this in order that He may explain Himself to them by meeting them on their own ground, and speaking to them in the only language they can understand. We call this the sacrifice of Christ, and in it we have the clue to all that we can know of the character of God, and therefore of the constitution of the universe, and the destiny of man.

It is for this reason that we have begun where it might have seemed that we should end,—with God; for this way alone is open to us. If God is the key to His Creation, then without God it will be for ever an insoluble problem; with Him, an open book, in which there may indeed be written things hard to understand, but which, little by little, we shall learn to decipher and to master. Let us endeavour then to regard the universe as we know it, in the light of the divine sacrifice; and in order to do this let us commence by inquiring a little more closely into the scope and significance of the latter.

In the first place, it is necessary to observe that though this sacrifice is first clearly made known to us in the life of Christ on earth, that was not its commencement. The sacrifice of God began with creation, for then,—using as we must use imperfect human words to embody truths which are too great for them,—He imposed conditions upon the manner of His working ; He limited Himself. What the conditions were, we are learning gradually to spell out. They may perhaps, according to our present knowledge,—and always with the reservation of the inadequacy of any human expression to render the divine meaning,—be summed up by saying that the sonship of the creature was the end and aim of the Creator.

Our consideration of the knowledge of good and evil led us to the conclusion that sonship involves a self-determining life. The son must grow into his father's likeness, he cannot be manufactured into it ; in other words, he must develop from within, not be coerced from with-

out. And hence we were constrained to say the possibility of the existence of evil ; for God reveals Himself to us as holy, and consequently as having the knowledge of good and evil ; yet, just because He knows, hating to the utmost that evil which is absolutely opposed to His nature, and which man must learn to hate in the same way, and for the same reason, before he can enter into true union with God.

It would seem then that the essence of the divine sacrifice lies in truth in God's so limiting Himself that the existence of evil, of that separation from Himself which is darkness and death, became possible. This is not the way in which the divine sacrifice is usually regarded. As a rule, we confine ourselves to saying that it was made in order to overcome evil ; but such a statement surely cannot express the truth. To overcome evil is a fulfilment of the divine life, not a limitation or a renouncement. To an All Holy Being the possibility of the existence of evil is the

sacrifice,—how great, how awful, it is not for the mind of man to fathom ; but the realisation of the fact that this is indeed what the sacrifice consists in, opens before us a depth of meaning in the revelation of God through Christ which otherwise is hidden from us, for here to a small extent,—so far as our human powers of understanding go,—we look into the tremendous mystery of what evil is to God. “No wonder,” says one of our greatest novelists, after drawing a heart-rending picture of human woe and agony, “No wonder that man needed a suffering God,”* and in her opinion it was out of the sense of his need that he evolved the illusory response to it, given in the Cross. But we who believe that the response is as real as the need itself, we who bear the name of Christ and put our trust in the supreme revelation which that Name implies, have we ever truly realised that God could not reveal Himself as what He was not, that if Christ

* George Eliot in “Adam Bede.”

suffered through evil, that is because, and only because, God suffers through evil also? "I and my Father are one." Again, this is not the aspect of the problem of evil with which we are familiar. It is the suffering to man which we nearly always regard; the more thoughtful among us extending our sympathy to the lower creation, or in some instances perhaps to the whole universe, feeling as we do that its history must be one with our own. But does it ever even cross our minds, as we contemplate and share in the pain which encounters us on every side, that the supreme sufferer in all this accumulation of suffering is God?

To think thus may involve some apparent paradoxes, some great difficulties; but none so great or so overwhelming as those we must face if we violently tear asunder the divine from the human in the nature of Christ,—if we bring ourselves to suppose that it was the man, and not the GOD-MAN, who suffered

and who suffers now, until the full fruition of His victory over evil is attained.

Such a suggestion may at first seem startling, almost presumptuous ; yet if we keep steadfastly in mind the fact to which the Incarnation bears such supreme witness,—that there is a true relationship between the human and the divine,—we cannot but acknowledge that the Christian revelation itself leads us to a conclusion which otherwise we could not have ventured to form ; we cannot but feel that man's mysterious capacity for suffering, the impossibility of his growth towards perfection without it, must have its root, not in himself, not in the being of man, but of God.

In contemplating this deep mystery, we must indeed be painfully conscious of our own limitations, of the inadequacy of human thought to attain to, and human language to express, the divine truth which we imperfectly perceive ; yet we dare not say that the connection of God with suffering is derogatory to

the idea of the All-Holy and All-Blest, for to this connection He has Himself set His seal. And if we are met,—as most surely we shall be met,—not only by sceptics from without, but by the perplexed and doubtful heart within,—with the unquenchable, invariable *Why*; why was all this allowed? Surely God could have prevented alike His own suffering and the suffering of man, by preventing evil, by not allowing that separation from Himself which involves such terrible consequences! To this the answer,—to the extent that we can formulate an answer penetrating so far into the deep things of God,—is: Yes; He could have prevented it, but at the cost of denying sonship to His creation. To attain this goal, the only possible road has been taken; and the reason of its being the only possible road lies in God's own nature as He has revealed it to us. He does not reveal Himself as bare power; in fact, except incidentally, not as power at all, but as righteousness and love. In the

inspired records, power is altogether subordinated to these. Righteousness and love wield the power ; they are not wielded by it ; and herein, we may remark, lies the true answer to that accusation of anthropomorphism so often brought against the Christian idea of God. Anthropomorphism, as is strikingly illustrated in the Greek, Roman, and Scandinavian mythologies, places power first, any other attribute afterwards. The conception of Himself which God has inspired in, and acknowledged to, men, places righteousness and love first, and power last.*

Are we then denying the first clause of the Christian Creed : " I believe in God the Father *almighty* " ? † By no means ; we are but giving

* Were it not that to do so would interrupt the argument in the text, it would be of advantage and interest to follow out this truth in more detail. The righteousness of God is the special revelation of the Old Testament, as the righteousness and love combined are of the New. First law, then love which is the fulfilling of law.

† But, as Dr. Westcott points out, the true translation of this word is all-sovereign, not almighty.

due weight,—as those who drew up the Creed did,—to the words which precede the word “almighty,” so often treated as though it were, or could be, isolated from them, “the *Father*.” The almightiness of God is subordinated to His fatherhood; and this He teaches us throughout the whole of that revelation, whose essence and culmination is Christ,—this He gives us to understand is, so far as we are able to apprehend it, the order of the Divine Nature. And because of the pre-eminence of the fatherhood in God, because He would have a universe of sons, not a universe of automata, He circumscribed His own action. He rendered possible the existence of evil, by communicating to His creation His own self-determining life, to which nevertheless this evil, this darkness of separation and disunion, is absolutely and eternally opposed.

Thus evil is what it is to the universe and to man, so awful, so ubiquitous, so strong, so apparently invincible, because of the utter

abomination it is to God. It is because man is made in the likeness of God that evil, that is separation from God, must ever be his bane and his destruction, so that in whatever self-deluding dreams he may indulge, he can never, save by doing violence to his nature, declare evil to be his good. And just as God has revealed to us in what His sacrifice consists, so He has revealed to us the end for which it was made: to render sonship possible, to bring about a nearer, more indissoluble, more comprehensive, in a word, more *personal* union between the self-conscious, intelligent beings, the spirits whom He has brought into existence, and Himself, than could otherwise have taken place.

And this brings us to the joy of creation so strikingly expressed in the familiar words: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and enables us to regard it as far more than a poetic fiction, a mere figment of the imagin-

ation. It is true that for His pleasure they are, and were created. The creature could have no gladness in its existence if the Creator had none, and so far, at least, as the world of human nature is concerned, we know that there exists intense happiness as well as intense pain. What we need to recognise is that in the union of joy and suffering which God has revealed to us as entering into His nature, we have a deep, the deepest reason for that strange and mysterious connection between them which we find in our own. It is a truism to say that great sorrow and great happiness are very closely related; that the one may at a moment's notice be changed into the other; nay, that the two may co-exist in the same person at the same time, each intensifying the other. These facts do not mean nothing. In the light of God's revelation of Himself to man they mean that even now, even in this darkness and separation, man is yet partaker in the divine life, and sharer in the divine joy and the

divine suffering ; and, paradoxical as it may seem, the joy is that to which the suffering ministers. The joy of fatherhood could not be God's, nor the joy of sonship man's, without the pain which each involves. This is a great mystery ; we cannot penetrate far into it ; but the reason, as well as the heart, can perceive that the ground and explanation of all other sacrifice is the sacrifice of God. Without this ground and explanation, sacrifice is meaningless, hopeless, fatally paradoxical ; whereas with it we may dare to hope and to believe that it is excess of light and not its absence which blinds us, and to trace with ever-increasing confidence and delight "the unfolding mysteries of science, believing that each new fact is revealing some step in an ascending scale of creatures, the lowest of which is the object of creating and redeeming love, and the highest of which is in communion with the Son of God." *

* F. D. Maurice, "Theological Essays," p. 238.

These words once more forcibly remind us that the divine sacrifice connects itself indissolubly with the life of Christ. He is its culminating expression, its interpretation, its fulfilment; and all which has its centre in Christ possesses a human as well as a divine significance. He is the representative of God to man; He is also the representative of man to God; and it is the human aspect of the divine sacrifice to which we must now turn our attention. From this standpoint, we shall perceive that it is not indeed sacrifice, but restitution.

The sacrifice of God lies in the circumscribing of His powers, which the communication of self-determining life to His creation implies, and in the voluntary submission, in the person of His Son, to the conditions of that order which He had called into being. The sacrifice of man, as represented in Christ and ratified by the spiritual genius and moral consensus of all antecedent and subsequent

ages, obscured though it has been by accidents of time and circumstance, consists in the absolute surrender of the will,—that master-faculty in the constitution of the self-conscious, intelligent life of spirit,—to God. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” God gave all that He could give to His creation. He gave Himself, His own life ; and just because of the munificence of the gift, it could be abused, and it has been abused. That which came from God, which could only find its home and its fulfilment in Him, opposed itself to Him, and entered into the miserable darkness of separation, which is eternal agony and eternal death. From this agony and death the deliverance came when Christ, as the representative of man, of the whole race and of each individual, renounced separation, and yielded Himself unreservedly to God, thus freely rendering back to Him, enhanced in value because it was freely rendered, the life which He had imparted to His creation. In this sense, Christ is “the

firstborn of every creature," and He took upon Him the representative right of the firstborn. Not however until each individual son has acknowledged and ratified in his own person the act of the elder brother, will the restitution so full of joy to God and man be realised throughout the universe as man knows it. Until then, to his sight, the shadow of separation rests upon it still ; and as to him it came in time, so in time it must be removed. But to this "far-off divine event,"—far-off and yet near, perpetually being realised as one and another erring spirit turns to the Father who gave it being, and to Him eternally present,—“the whole creation moves ;” nor can anything frustrate, or impede, or even hinder, its fulfilment.

Let us turn now to regard not only man, but the universe, in the light of these considerations. Our thoughts must take this wide sweep, include this vast field, because we cannot separate man from the order to which he

belongs,—because so far as his eye can reach, or his intellect penetrate, there are tokens of the same struggle which he finds prevailing in himself, and which in himself he distinctly knows as the conflict between good and evil. And before briefly passing these tokens in review we may perhaps fitly remark, that it is a narrow and feeble conception of the Cosmos which would lead us to regard man as the only creaturely exemplification of self-conscious, intelligent life to be found in the universe. Such a conception is certainly not justified by science, still less by religion; and its indulgence contributes not a little to that exclusive, self-centred manner of regarding the divine order, which, the farther we penetrate into it, the more we see to be utterly inimical to its true apprehension.

Though, however, we cannot but believe that there exist in other worlds than our own, self-conscious, intelligent beings, science has not yet found, perhaps in this stage of man's

existence will never find, any means of communication with them; and that because of the common limitations which exist. The laws of nature, as we know them, must strictly confine beings of constitution at all similar to our own,—expressing themselves, that is, in what we have learned to regard as a “material” manner,—to that portion of the universe in which they have been developed. In other words, space and time, and all that space and time imply, must be as real to them as to us. That there are other beings, under totally different conditions, to whom such boundaries do not exist, the inspired records distinctly lead us to believe, and thus agree with a human experience which, though not universal in the sense that it belongs to every individual of the race, yet is so in the sense that it has been claimed by an appreciable number of sane individuals, in all ages and under widely different circumstances. Such a fact as this, science is just

beginning to see that she cannot wisely disregard ; but the investigations to which it gives rise are attended by peculiar difficulties, and are not yet carried on by a sufficient number of persons, under sufficiently varied conditions, to allow of the results obtained being regarded as verified in the overwhelmingly conclusive manner which men of science, as such, are bound to demand. For this reason further reference is not made to a subject which is nevertheless of high interest and importance. As Christians, however, we acknowledge that the universal spiritual life has attained, in other beings besides the human, to that self-conscious, intelligent stage, in which it recognises itself as spiritual, and takes upon itself the mysterious attributes of personality. We are told, indeed, but little in the Scriptures regarding these fellow-spirits, yet the intimations given certainly lead us to conclude that they also have the knowledge of good and evil, and have been not only witnesses of, but partakers in

the conflict which to finite beings such knowledge involves, though under conditions differing from, and probably unrealisable by, their human brothers.

It is not necessary, however, to have recourse to such considerations as these in order to justify the statement that throughout the universe, as man knows it, there are tokens of the same struggle which he finds in himself. The "Nature red in tooth and claw," so relentlessly placed before him by the discoveries and generalisations of modern biological science, confronts him, now that his eyes are opened, at every step. The struggle for existence, which the great principle of natural selection implies, results in such waste, such destruction of the helpless, such an apparently overwhelming practical assertion that might is right, that the organic world more resembles a vast slaughter-house of the innocents, than anything else that can be conceived. Nor do the assurances advanced by some of our most

distinguished naturalists, that too much is made of the sufferings of the lower animals, that on the whole for them the happiness of existence outweighs the pain, do more than touch, if they so much as touch, the surface of the question. Against the few who survive, who succeed, by reason of their superior "fitness," in ousting all competitors from the field, we must set the myriads who perish ; in whom, on the large hypothesis that suffering is escaped, the possibility of happiness is not fulfilled, while invariably so far as individuals are concerned, and not infrequently with regard to species, the survivors themselves perish in the end. In the last resort, death spares neither victors nor vanquished in the struggle for life ; and it is not possible for a human being, to whom the word " death " sums up so much of agony, dread, and loss, to regard its apparently undisputed sway over the lower creation with calmness and indifference, even though he may often mete it out with his own hand, and may

be fully convinced of the fact that its significance in these subordinate realms of life falls far below its significance to himself. And yet we must bear in mind that what death ministers to is not death but life. These hecatombs of victims are sacrificed in order that, throughout the organic world, the most perfect attainable life of which each surviving species is capable may be reached and maintained; and according to one of our greatest living biologists, it was on this account, because in no other way could this end be attained, that the "adaptation" of death arose. The whole passage in which this suggestion is made is so remarkable, and affords such ample material for reflection, that no apology is offered for citing it almost in full.

"It is only from the point of view of utility that we can understand the necessity of death. The same arguments which were employed to explain the necessity for as short a life as possible will, with but a slight modification, serve to explain the common

necessity of death. Let us imagine that one of the higher animals became immortal ; it then becomes perfectly obvious that it would cease to be of value to the species to which it belonged. Suppose that such an immortal individual could escape all fatal accidents through infinite time,—a supposition which is of course hardly conceivable. The individual would nevertheless be unable to avoid, from time to time, slight injuries to one or another part of its body. The injured parts could not regain their former integrity, and thus the longer the individual lived, the more defective and crippled it would become, and the less perfectly would it fulfil the purpose of its species. Individuals are injured by the operation of external forces, and for this reason alone it is necessary that new and perfect individuals should continually arise and take their place, and this necessity would remain even if the individuals possessed the power of living eternally. From this follows, on the one hand, the necessity of reproduction, and on the other, the utility of death. Worn-out individuals are not only valueless to the species, but they are even harmful, for they take the place of those that are sound. Hence by the operation of natural selection, the life of our hypothetically immortal individual would be shortened by the amount which was useless

to the species. It would be reduced to a length which would afford the most favourable conditions for the existence of as large a number as possible of vigorous individuals at the same time. If by these considerations death is shown to be a beneficial occurrence, it by no means follows that it is to be solely accounted for on grounds of utility. Death might also depend upon causes which lie in the nature of life itself. The floating of ice upon water seems to us to be a useful arrangement, although the fact that it does float depends upon its molecular structure, and not upon the fact that its doing so is of any advantage to us. In like manner the necessity of death has been hitherto explained as due to causes which are inherent in organic nature, and not to the fact that it may be advantageous. I do not, however, believe in the validity of this explanation. I consider that death is not a primary necessity, but that it has been secondarily acquired as an adaptation. I believe that life is endowed with a fixed duration, not because it is contrary to its nature to be unlimited, but because the unlimited existence of individuals would be a luxury without any corresponding advantage. . . . It is useless to object that man (or any of the higher animals,) dies from the physical necessity of his nature, just as the specific gravity of ice results

from its physical nature. I am quite ready to admit that this is the case. . . . There cannot be the least doubt that the higher organisms as they are now constructed, contain within themselves the germs of death. The question, however, arises as to how this has come to pass ; and I reply that death is to be looked upon as an occurrence which is advantageous to the species as a concession to the outer conditions of life, and not as an absolute necessity, inherent in life itself. Death—that is, the end of life—is by no means, as is usually assumed, an attribute of all organisms. An immense number of low organisms do not die, although they are easily destroyed, being killed by heat, poisons, etc. As long, however, as those conditions which are necessary for their life are fulfilled, they continue to live, and they thus carry the potentiality of unending life in themselves. . . . The process of fission in the *amœba* has been recently much discussed, and I am well aware that the life of the individual is generally believed to come to an end with the division which gives rise to two new individuals, as if death and reproduction were the same thing. But this process cannot be truly called death. Where is the dead body ? What is it that dies ? Nothing dies ; the body of the animal only divides into two similar parts, possessing the

same constitution. . . . As far as these organisms are concerned, death can only be spoken of in the most figurative sense. . . .

"Now, if numerous organisms, endowed with the potentiality of never-ending life, have real existence, the question arises as to whether the fact can be understood from the point of view of utility. If death has been shown to be a necessary adaptation for the higher organisms, why should it not be so for the lower also? Are they not decimated by enemies? Are they not often imperfect? Are they not worn out by contact with the external world? Although they are certainly destroyed by other animals, there is nothing comparable to that deterioration of the body which takes place in the higher organisms. Unicellular animals are too simply constructed for this to be possible. If an infusorian is injured by the loss of some part of its body, it may often recover its former integrity, but if the injury is too great, it dies. The alternative is always perfect integrity or complete destruction."*

Not the least remarkable feature in this remarkable passage is the manner in which it

* "Weissman's Essays," vol. i. Essay on the Duration of Life, pp. 23-6.

calls attention to the fact that "natural" death is predicable only of the higher organisms. Only life which has attained to a certain development can (apart from violence, and in the ordinary course of nature,) be given up. We are, therefore, brought face to face with the amazing paradox that as life grows in value, the need for its sacrifice appears, and death becomes not a possibility involved in, but a necessary consequence of, existence. Biology can meet us with no explanation here. That death is useful may in a sense, indeed, account for its appearance; but that the conditions of organic evolution should be such as to entail this apparently extraordinary waste of the very life to whose development the whole course of nature has tended, remains an insoluble problem. The fact that death is a *sine qua non* of fuller life must have a deep-seated reason in "the nature of things," only to be understood by regarding it in its cosmic relation, *i.e.*, as interpreted in the light of the

Divine Sacrifice in creation. Here we have a reason for the appearance of death. Since in creating God imposed limitations on Himself, since the life which He imparted to His creation was self-determining and therefore given up to it, the principle of giving up, of sacrifice, enters into the very constitution of the universe, and must be expressed through every stage of its existence. From the circumstances of the case, it must be so most markedly when in the organic world vital phenomena appear and take precedence of all others ; and that for the very reason which, apart from this consideration, appears only a hopeless contradiction, the fuller and higher manifestation to which life has attained. A universe into whose life sacrifice enters as an intrinsic constituent must, as that life develops, necessarily exhibit the principle of sacrifice in a continually more pronounced and evident manner ; and the fact that such a principle exists and demands for itself a perpetual expression has its root in the

deeper fact, that in creating the Creator sacrificed Himself. But the sacrifice of a self to an object outside the self, is known to us by one name only,—it is an act of love; and the sacrifice of God in creation, together with all the consequences it has involved, is God's act of love, the pledge and assurance to us that love is the essence of His being; and if of His, then necessarily of the universe to which His life has been imparted.

Here, therefore, we again encounter the explanation of the appearance of evil. Love can never be compulsory; to be love at all, it must be freely rendered, and consequently in a universe whose law is love the possibility of not loving must exist. Not to love, however, is contrary to the law of life; and so it entails pain, loss, disunion, all that we know as evil, wounding, through the creation which is loved, the Creator Who loves. Yet this love, being eternal as Himself, cannot cease to be, because the life which He has imparted has opposed

itself to Him, its source and goal. It awaits, unchanged and unchangeable, that which His sacrifice was made to win—the full, complete, and spontaneous response of the whole creation, consisting, in so far as man is concerned, of the recognition that He is a son, and as a son enters into that “fellowship with the Father” which such a relation, and such a relation alone, implies.

And thus we bring to an end the present brief consideration of this tremendous subject. Here, as throughout the volume, it has been only possible to give a bare indication of the line of thought which the writer has desired to bring before her readers. She ventures nevertheless to hope it will have succeeded, to some extent at any rate, in showing that the appeal of the Christian Revelation is indeed to the whole nature of man ; that to the reason as well as to the heart, the Fatherhood of God, His true kinship to the universe He has created, and to the personal spirits which

are the outcome of that creation, is the one sufficient answer in all perplexities. An answer of this description can never so cramp and confine our knowledge of God, as to reduce it to a hard-and-fast system ; it must always leave room for growth and for expansion :

“Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be ;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Yes, infinitely more than the best of them, because it is not an intellectual abstraction which we are seeking to embody, nor a scientific formula we are endeavouring to interpret, but a living Person Who is revealing Himself to us. Through all the vicissitudes of human experience, and all the problems and anomalies of the universe which human experience sums up, He is leading us certainly, unfailingly, to a closer union with Himself ;

and at last, to each and all, the day shall dawn when the shadow of separation shall flee away for ever, and the whole emancipated man acknowledge that God is Light, because God is Love.